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MENDELSSOHN'S LETTERS.

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LETTERS

FROM

ITALY AND SWITZERLAND.

BY

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

LADY WALLACE.

NINTH EDITION.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1887.

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

I HAVE taken the opportunity of another Edition being called for of both series of Mendelssohn's Letters, to revise them carefully; and it is a great pleasure to be able to prefix to the First Volume a notice on the subject of Mendelssohn's Life, by H. F. CHORLEY, ESQ., which cannot fail to impart additional interest to these Volumes.

GRACE WALLACE.

Ainderby Hall, April 22, 1864.

1244

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PREFACE.

LAST YEAR a paragraph was inserted in the newspapers, requesting any one who possessed letters from Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to send them to Professor Droysen, or to myself, with the view of completing a selection from his correspondence which we contemplated publishing. Our design in this was twofold.

In the first place, we wished to offer to the public in Mendelssohn's own words, which always so truly and faithfully mirrored his thoughts, the most genuine impression of his character; and secondly, we thought that the biographical elements contained in such a correspondence might be of infinite use in the compilation of a memoir —which we reserve for a future day—and serve as its precursor and basis.

There are difficulties, however, opposed to the immediate fulfilment of our original purpose to its full extent; and at present it is impossible to decide when these can be removed.

I have, therefore, formed the resolution to carry out my plan in the meantime within more circumscribed limits, but which leave me unfettered.

On Mendelssohn's return from his first visit to England, in the year 1829, he came to Berlin for a short time to attend a family festivity, and thence in 1830 proceeded to Italy, returning through Switzerland to France, and in the beginning of 1832 visiting England for the second time.

This period, which to a certain degree forms a separate section of his life, and which, through the vivid impressions it made, assuredly exercised an important influence on Mendelssohn's development (we may mention that he was only one-and-twenty at the commencement of this journey), supplies us with a number of letters addressed to his parents, and to his sisters, Fanny and Rebecca,

as well as to myself. I have also added some communications of the same date to various friends, partly entire and partly in extracts, and now present them to the public in their original integrity.

Those who were personally acquainted with Mendelssohn, and who wish once more to realise him as he was when in life—and those also who would be glad to acquire a more definite idea of his individuality, than can be found in the general inferences deduced from his musical creations—will not lay down these letters dissatisfied. Along with this particular source of interest they offer a more universal one, as they prove how admirably Mendelssohn's superior nature, and perceptions of Art, mutually pervaded and regulated each other.

With this view, it appeared to me a duty to give to the public these letters, stored up in the peaceful home for which they were originally destined, and exclusively intended, and thus to make them accessible to a more extended circle. They begin by a visit to Goethe. May his

words then accompany these Letters, as an appropriate convoy:—

> Be sure the works of mighty men,
> The good, the faithful, the sublime,
> Stored in the gallery of Time,
> Repose awhile—to wake again.*

PAUL MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

BERLIN: *March* 1861.

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* Was in der Zeiten Bildersaal
Jemals ist trefflich gewesen,
Das wird immer einer einmal
Wieder auffrischen, und lesen.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

In the midst of the histories of hope deferred, of powers wasted, of faculties half developed, of passions and appetites forced into preternatural activity, which the biography of Musicians includes, the tale of the virtuous, brilliant, and successful career of Felix Mendelssohn stands alone and apart.

"The boy," wrote Goethe of him, "was born upon a lucky day." The day was in the year 1809; the place was Hamburg.—His father, the son of the celebrated philosopher, was himself an enlightened and accomplished man—a merchant in opulent circumstances. His mother was superior in every sense of the word; —not merely in ordering her own household life, but in looking beyond it, to every influence and enjoyment from without, which intellect and art and literature could furnish;—a serene, cordial woman, as unpretending as she was gentle, who will live in the recollections of all who have known her, by that distinction in manner, in thought, and in acquirements, which so excellently freshens and warms the atmosphere in which

Genius is born and nurtured. Thus the child had every advantage which parental pride, intelligent foresight, and tender affection could afford.—Never can genius have been less forced in its culture than his. The extreme quickness of Felix, however, made all learning easy to him. He early became a good classical scholar, mastered most of the European languages, and, "got into Music he hardly knew how." But there lay his chiefest gift; and his father's house was one in which all musicians, among other celebrities, were welcomed. His mother was able to give him his first lessons in the art, increasing them by a minute daily. During a sojourn in Paris, he (with his sister) received professional instruction on the pianoforte from Madame Bigot,—a lady of Alsatian origin, who had studied in Vienna; to whose musical taste and understanding and personal kindness he always referred in affectionate and grateful terms.—On returning to Germany, Felix was placed at Berlin under the tuition of Zelter, the friend of Goethe, for the science of music, and of Berger for the pianoforte. He was, for a short period, too, a pupil under Hummel. Under all he laboured *well*,—but never *hard*. Besides great aptitude to acquire, Nature had given him a singular vivacity and willingness of finger, which made all the combinations of keyed instruments easy to him. His sister Fanny, Madame Hensel, also remarkable as a musician, used to tell how, on a visit of Kalkbrenner to Berlin, he caught and executed after a single hearing a famous left-handed passage in the

'Effusio Musica,' which in those days was thought the *ne plus ultra* of execution.

Before this time, the wonderful boy had been brought under Goethe's notice, by his master and their mutual friend Zelter. Nor did his good fortune in the matter of cultivation fail him thenceforth. The easy circumstances of his parents permitted him to travel through Germany, and to England. The latter was his first journey independent of tutelage. He was wont to refer with exquisite delight to his first visit to London, and to his later circuit in Scotland and Wales, during which life-friendships were made, only to be dissolved by death. He visited, shortly afterwards, Italy and France,—the sprightliness and sweetness of his manners (not unchequered in those early days by bursts of amusing petulance and self-assertion) winning him friends and pleasures wherever he went.—"In Hungary," wrote Goethe, "he saw the crowning of an imperial head; in Rome he finds a conclave; and even Vesuvius gets up a spectacle for him." Previously to leaving Germany he had tried his hand at opera-writing in 'Camacho's Wedding,' which was produced at Berlin; the small success of which contributed to that almost perverse indifference to all temptations to write again for the stage which he was trying to overcome at the time of his death. It was in England that his musical vocation was thoroughly assured.—The audience of our Philharmonic Concerts was among the first to appreciate the rare beauty and fantasy of his Overture to the

'Midsummer Night's Dream.' That once heard and recognized, there could be no further hesitation. A new composer was accredited past the power of critics or cavillers to obscure or destroy.—It was in England, too, that the Overture to the 'Isles of Fingal' was written, and others of his early works first published.

After four years of travelling, gathering and composing, Mendelssohn was next publicly to be heard of at the Aix-la-Chapelle Festival, in 1834; about which time he accepted a directorship of music at Düsseldorf, accompanied with some charge of the Opera conjointly with Herr Immermann. The last appointment, however, he soon relinquished. While he was resident at Düsseldorf, the principal part of his Oratorio 'St. Paul' was composed. It was produced there in the year 1836, according to the good fashion of the Lower-Rhine Musical Festivals, which made a new work a necessary feature of every meeting. During the same year it was given for the first time in England, at Liverpool.—Mendelssohn's residence at Düsseldorf was not of long duration, since, in 1837,—shortly after his marriage with a young lady of Frankfort—he took up his abode at Leipzig as Director of the Concerts there. He was invested with the degree of Doctor by the University of that town. At Leipzig, Mendelssohn's happiest days were spent. To narrate how his energy, hospitality, and superintendence revived the musical life of the place, and raised a set of concerts with insufficient materials into a series of orchestral performances, which might compete with the

most renowned ones of Europe,—how, from the youths whom circumstances brought round him and his personal influence fascinated, a school of composers has arisen,—how a burgher town (rich in the traditions of Bach, but poor in court-honours) once again became the capital of instrumental music and artistic life in Germany,—would be merely to transcribe the notes of every traveller who had ears to hear and faculties to make comparisons withal.—Every day seemed to increase the sphere of the composer's usefulness, and to extend his reputation. Nor was there ever reputation which owed less to dishonourable or indirect practices.—Mendelssohn was no suppliant for orders; no intriguer for serenades and torch-processions; no trafficker with journalists. He was again and again given to understand that Royal favour waited for him ere he could decide even to try how far a Court appointment at Berlin would suit his independence. The result was, that after months of experiment (during which he satisfied himself that he could serve his King in any way better than among the intrigues and formalities which belong to kings' antechambers) he obtained leave to reside without Court precincts, and returned again to pitch his tent in friendly Leipzig.—There till his death he resided, with occasional and increasing absences, rendered inevitable by the calls made upon him from every quarter; for not merely his music was wanted, but his presence as a conductor.—It is impossible in description to exaggerate the wholesome inspiriting influence which he exercised wherever he came, at home or

abroad,—impossible to forget how the hearty people of the old German towns turned out like one man, to follow, and to crown, and to serenade him; impossible not to recall the boyish, candid delight, and yet modesty, with which he enjoyed his popularity. His warm home-affections doubled his sense of every new honour he gained, his value of every reward showered on him. And it must be expressly added, that popularity, honour, or reward, neither harmed him nor made him selfish. Though, as his letters for the first time tell the world, he was (at least till the decease of his father) left to the resources of his own art, after he had once embarked in the steady duties of musical life, he was never inconsiderate or grasping in his demands,—he never demanded impossibilities in the production of his works, never became greedy for money. The amount of help which he administered to others will never be known. All that he did was done with so much spontaneous good-nature and gaiety, that his kindly acts of service might have been so many obligations to himself, and not to those served by him.

Within these limits, it is impossible to follow Mendelssohn's career point by point, from strength to strength, from conquest to conquest. It culminated, so to say, in 'Elijah,' his seventieth work, written for the Birmingham Festival; and the performance of which Oratorio is, possibly, the most triumphant *first* performance recorded in the Chronicles of Music.

Yet, after this first performance, the master could so clear his brain from the intoxication of the incense of

praise, as to be able, calmly and severely, to reconsider his creation, and remodel and amend that which he felt was weak in it.

The published produce of Mendelssohn's brief and bright career embraces almost every province of musical composition—Opera alone excepted. The stores of orchestral music were enriched by him with three grand Symphonies (the last, in A minor, it has been said, owing its origin to reminiscences of the same Highland journey as gave birth to the 'Isles of Fingal' overture), four grand romantic Concert Overtures, besides two or three less important ones, several pianoforte concert pieces, and the incomparable violin *Concerto.* With these may be mentioned the *Cantata* on Goethe's 'First Walpurgis Night,' with its descriptive prelude; and one or two *Scenas* for *solo* voices. In sacred music, the world owes to him two Oratorios, the 'St. Paul' and the 'Elijah'—several Psalms: the 'Lobgesang' (or Hymn of Praise), with its symphonic preface—the Catholic compositions, 'Lauda Sion,' written for a solemnity at Liége; the Hymns for the nuns of the Convent of Trinità di Monti, Rome, and an 'Ave Maria,'—further the remarkable Lutheran service-music produced for Berlin; and the Cathedral service for England. The amount of his concerted vocal music and single songs is extensive. Among Mendelssohn's published chamber-music may be specified an Ottett, two Quintetts, eight Quartetts, for stringed instruments;—three pianoforte Quartetts, two Trios, and three Duet *Sonatas;*—for piano-

forte *solo*, Preludes and Fugues, *Rondos*, Studies, characteristic pieces and 'Lieder ohne Worte,'—a form of composition entirely created by Mendelssohn, as different from the *Romances* of the Steibelts and Fields as from the operatic *transcripts* of the Liszts and Thalbergs;—for the Organ, six grand *Sonatas*, and other pieces.

There is still to be mentioned Mendelssohn's theatrical music, produced for the Court of Prussia,—his exquisite settings and *entr'actes* completing the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,'—his noble choruses to 'Antigone,' his music to the 'Œdipus;'—and his choruses to Racine's 'Athalie,' written to the French text. No common versatility and dramatic power, it must be insisted, were required to grasp subjects so widely different as the pompous hymns of the old Greek dramatist and the revel of the faëry court conjured up by Shakspeare. Of the last poet the Master was a diligent student; and was used to speak of many among the Plays which could be arranged in the operatic form, as tasks he one day might attempt—"when," he would say, he "could write better." Meanwhile, there remain some fragments, and one *finale* of 'Loreley'—an opera which was to be produced at Berlin,—written in Switzerland in 1847, on the text of Herr Geibel. Nor must we forget the operetta 'Heimkehr,' a trifle written for a family festival on the return of the (not prodigal) son from his wanderings,—to words by his devoted friend Charles Klingemann,—which, yet, has appeared and been approved on our stage in its English dress.

There is much unpublished music by Mendelssohn. Many elaborate works remain in manuscript which he felt to be incomplete, and which, therefore, he would never give out during his lifetime.—Since there has been a large amount of talk concerning this matter, it may not be wrong to plead, respect to the wishes of the Dead.

As a performer—had Mendelssohn not been averse to public exhibition, distrustful of all that it brings, and from first to last regarding it as totally subservient to the composer's intentions,—he might, on the strength of his executive powers alone, have challenged Europe. His mechanical facility on the pianoforte was prodigious; his expression was true and deep, without a tinge of grimace or caricature; his style was unapproachable in its grace, and animated by that vivacity which also gave such a charm to his demeanour. His readiness, science, and humour in extemporizing were unsurpassed. His memory was prodigious, and his fancy inexhaustible. He could play on other instruments than pianoforte or organ;—the *viola* among the number. He preferred, however, the organ to the pianoforte; since on that nobler instrument his ideas, always cast in large and orchestral proportions, amplified by every resource of consummate learning and experience, could be most thoroughly expressed by his vigorous hand. The writer may be permitted a moment's reminiscence of one of the Master's organ improvisations—most probably his last. The time was

a few days before he left Switzerland for his death-bed; the place was the hamlet-church of Ringgenberg, by the side of the Lake of Brienz, inaccessible save from the water, and only to be reached by steps in the rock overgrown with ivy and moss and maidenhair; the organ was a poor little instrument, built by a Vallaisan maker. It seemed, however, as if the Poet's spirit gave it power and voice and grandeur; while he sat there, for the pleasure of one or two friends exciting himself by his own performance,—chain after chain of lofty thoughts and noble modulations unfolding themselves, —till the confined space and the limited means under his grasp were forgotten in the triumphant exercise of that art which, as Milton sang, brings

"all Heaven before the eyes."

He had been almost tempted to pass on to Fribourg to play upon Mooser's famous organ, but the weather prevented him. "Winter," he said, "was coming, and he had better draw quietly homewards."—A few weeks later he was dead.

Thus much with regard to the Artist. Of the man, it is difficult for those who knew him to speak in terms which shall not seem exaggerated. To such as have been used to distrust or make excuses for genius, as a fever necessarily destructive of sound principles and healthy domestic affections, to those who maintain that a life of exhibition, fame, and adulation must be incompatible with the simplest tastes and the freshest enjoyments, Mendelssohn may be pointed out

as an instance falsifying all their accusations or self-apologies.

Rarely, if ever, has culture been more wisely and liberally bestowed than in the case of this fortunate boy. Rarely, if ever, have affection and intelligence reaped a richer harvest. The man was as gracious as he was gifted. Evil seemed to glance aside from him; Temptation to get no hold on him. He was singularly exact without pedantry. Everything that he acquired was ranged according to its value in the chambers of a memory which nothing seemed to encumber. He learned with extreme ease and rapidity, yet retained that which was solid and serious with a steadfastness rare in men of so mercurial a temperament as his. Though he was full of vivacity and humour, endowed with a keenness of observation not to be surpassed, there was not a grain of mockery in his composition. He delighted to admire and to venerate;—from the first to the last he had an unaffected relish and enjoyment in the society of those older than himself, while he retained the merriment of a child, and his sympathy with childhood. Everything that was good and beautiful in Art or in Nature,—no matter what the form and order, no matter what the climate, no matter what the period,—was not so much seen and studied as possessed by him. He was richly accomplished in other worlds of imagination than his own. He was a ready and exquisite linguist, endowed with that instinct for subtlety in language of which many less perfectly

educated persons never dream. He was an affectionate son and brother, an exemplary and devoted husband, a wise and indulgent father. He remained faithful to old friends with a constancy rare even among those who are less brilliantly tempted to fickleness. His wit was as ready, his spirit was as playful, as his sense was sound. While never was musician more keenly alive to the beauty of his own art, few men, it must be repeated, have possessed tastes and sympathies embracing so wide a circle of pursuits and objects. He drew from nature with great fidelity; he kept close pace with the questions of the day and its literature, solid or ephemeral. Let it never be forgotten that he was intensely and affectionately German; regarding his country and its prospects with an interest impossible to counterfeit or conceal, and anxious to employ Music as an instrument of peace, brotherly love, and progress. Deeply marked, however, as was his nationality, it was neither morbid nor narrowing in its influences. There has never been a foreigner more honest in his love for, more discriminating in his appreciation of, England. He relished our humour, he loved our poetry, he interested himself in our politics;—and how heartily and charmingly he gave himself up to all that was best and sincerest in our society, his sorrowing friends have a thousand reasons to remember.—To close, not complete, this personal sketch, let it be said that Nature had gifted her favourite with one of the brightest and most expressive countenances ever bestowed on a man of Genius.

Those who have seen its expression at once brighten and deepen as he sat "making music" (his own phrase), or have watched its wonderful play in society, will bear the writer out in saying that the best portrait extant is but meagre and pedantic as a likeness.

The sword, however, was appointed to wear out the scabbard. Mendelssohn had long begun to feel that the ceaseless excitement of his professional life was maintained at the peril of his health, and, as such, to be laid aside. It was his earnest intention to disengage himself from what might be called the *exhibitional* part of his duties, to live in retirement with his family, and devote himself exclusively to composition. As time went on, he had restricted himself in organ playing, on account of the fatigue and nervous agitation which it produced. It was but a few days after he quitted England, during his last brilliant sojourn there, in 1847, that he was startled by the news of the death of his sister, Madame Hensel, to whom he was tenderly attached. This he never recovered. From that moment forward, though he resumed his habits of occupation, and a certain cheerfulness of intercourse with his family and friends, he would speak to them of his own approaching departure with a presentiment which bystanders interpreted as merely over-wrought feeling, but which would seem to argue that he was visited by warnings of dangerous malady.—Shortly after his return to Leipzig from Switzerland, where he passed the summer, he was arrested on the 8th of October by an attack of

nervous disorder in the head, strangely similar to that which had already proved so fatal in his family. From this he rallied; but the disease returned, more than once, until his exhausted frame had no strength left to oppose to its violence. He died at Leipzig on the 4th of November, 1847, lovingly tended,—to the consternation and distress of a larger circle of devoted friends than most men can number, and leaving in his own world of Art a void which there is small rational chance of any person of the present generation living to see filled.

HENRY F. CHORLEY.

LETTERS.

Weimar, May 21st, 1830.

NEVER, in the whole course of my travels, do I remember such a cheerful fresh day for a journey as yesterday. In the early morning the sky was grey and cloudy, but later the sun burst forth; the air was cool and pleasant, and it was Ascension Sunday; the people were all dressed in their best, and in one village I saw them going into church, in another coming out again, and in another, playing at bowls. The gardens were bright with tulips, and I drove quickly along, looking at everything. At Weissenfels they gave me a little basket carriage, and at Naumburg an open droschky; my effects, including my hat and cloak, being piled upon it behind. I bought a few bunches of lilies-of-the-valley, and thus I travelled on through the country, as if on a pleasure excursion.

Some students came up to me beyond Naumburg, and envied me. We then drove past President G——, wedged into a small carriage, which evidently found it hard to hold him, and his daughters or *wives;* in short,

the two ladies with him, who appeared equally envious of my position. We actually *trotted* up the Kosen Hill, for the horses had scarcely anything to pull, and overtook several heavily-laden carriages, the drivers of which no doubt also envied me, for I was really to be envied. The scenery had a charming air of spring—so cheerful and gay and blooming. The sun sank solemnly behind the hills, and presently we came up with the Russian minister and his suite, in two heavy carriages, each with four horses, in true ponderous official array; and I shot past him in my light droschky like a hare.

In the evening I got a pair of restive horses, so as not to be without some little drawback, (the presence of which, in my opinion, is essential to enjoyment,) and not a single bar did I compose all day, but enjoyed complete idleness. It was a delicious day, and one I shall not soon forget. I close this description with the remark, that the children in Eckartsberge dance merry rounds hand-in-hand, just as ours do at home, and that the appearance of a stranger did not in the least disturb them, in spite of his distinguished air; I should have liked to join in their game.

May 24th.

I wrote this before going to see Goethe, early in the forenoon, after a walk in the park; but I could not find a moment to finish my letter till now. I shall probably remain here for a couple of days more, which is no sacrifice, for I never saw the old gentleman so cheerful and amiable as on this occasion, or so talkative

and communicative. My especial reason however for staying two days longer, is a very agreeable one, and makes me almost vain, or I ought rather to say proud, and I do not intend to keep it secret from you,—Goethe, you must know, sent me a letter yesterday addressed to an artist here, a painter, which I am to deliver myself; and Ottilie confided to me that it contains a commission to take my portrait, as Goethe wishes to place it in a collection of likenesses he has recently commenced of his friends. This gratified me much; as however I have not yet seen the complaisant artist who is to accomplish this, nor has he seen me, it is probable that I shall have to remain here until the day after to-morrow. I don't in the least regret this, for, as I told you, I live a most agreeable life here, and thoroughly enjoy the society of the old poet. I have dined with him every day, and am invited again to-day. This evening there is to be a party at his house, where I am to play. It is quite delightful to hear him conversing on every subject, and seeking information on all points.

I must however tell you everything regularly and in order, so that you may know each separate detail, Early in the day I went to see Ottilie, who, though still delicate, and often complaining, I thought more cheerful than formerly, and quite as kind and amiable as ever towards myself. We have been constantly together since then, and it has been a source of much pleasure to me to know her more intimately. Ulrike

is more agreeable and charming than ever; a certain earnestness pervades her whole nature, and she has now a degree of repose, and a depth of feeling, that render her one of the most attractive creatures I have ever met. The two boys, Walter and Wolf, are lively, studious, cordial lads, and to hear them talking about "Grandpapa's Faust," is really too nice.

But to return to my narrative. I sent Zelter's letter at once to Goethe, who immediately invited me to dinner. I thought him unchanged in appearance, but at first rather silent and apathetic; I think he wished to see how I demeaned myself. I was vexed, and thought that possibly he was always now in this mood. Happily the conversation turned on the *Frauen-Verein* in Weimar, and on the 'Chaos,' a humorous paper circulated among themselves by the ladies here, I having soared so high as to be a contributor to this undertaking. All at once the old man became quite gay, laughing at the two ladies about their charities and intellectualism, and their subscriptions and hospital work, which he seems cordially to detest. He called on me to aid him in his onslaught, and as I did not require to be asked twice, he speedily became just what he used to be, and at last more kind and confidential than I had ever seen him. The assault soon became general. The 'Robber Bride' of Ries, he said, contained all that an artist in these days required to live happily,—a robber and a bride; then he attacked the young people of the present day for their universal tendency to languor and melan-

choly, and related the story of a young lady to whom he had once paid court, and who also felt some interest in him; a discussion on the exhibitions followed, and a fancy bazaar for the poor, where the ladies of Weimar were the shopwomen, and where he declared it was impossible to purchase anything because the young people made a private agreement among themselves, and hid the different articles till the proper purchasers appeared.

After dinner he all at once began,—"Gute Kinder, hübsche Kinder, muss immer lustig sein—Tolles Volk," etc., his eyes looking like those of a drowsy old lion. Then he begged me to play to him, and said it seemed strange that he had heard no music for so long; that the art had greatly advanced without his marking its progress, and, therefore, he wished me to tell him a great deal on the subject, "for you know," he added, "we must talk a little sense together too;" then, turning to Ottilie, he said, "No doubt you have already made your own wise arrangements, but they must yield to my express orders, which are, that you must make tea here this evening, that we may be all together again." When in return she asked him if it would not make him too late, as Riemer was coming to work with him, he replied, "As you let your boys off their Latin to-day, that they might hear Felix play, you may also give me a holiday for once from *my* work." He invited me to return to dinner, and I played a great deal to him in the evening.

My three Welsh pieces, dedicated to three English sisters, have great success here;* and I am trying to rub up my English. As I had begged Goethe to address me as *thou*, he sent me word by Ottilie on the following day, that in that case I must remain longer than the two days I had fixed, otherwise he could not regain the more familiar habit I wished. He repeated this to me himself, saying that he did not think I should lose much by staying a little longer, and invited me always to dine with him when I had no other engagement. I have consequently been with him every day, and yesterday I told him a great deal about Scotland, and Hengstenberg, and Spontini, and Hegel's 'Æsthetics.'† He sent me to Tiefurth with the ladies, but prohibited my driving to Berka, because a very pretty girl lived there, and he did not wish to plunge me into misery.

I thought to myself, this was indeed the Goethe of whom people will one day say, that he was not one single individual, but consisted of several *Goethiden*. I am to play over to him to-day various pieces of Bach, Haydn, and Mozart, and thus lead him on, as he said, to the present day.

I should indeed have been very foolish to have regretted my delay; besides, I am a conscientious travel-

* Three pieces for the piano, composed in 1829, at Coeddu, in Wales, for the album of three young English ladies; subsequently published as Opus 16.

† Felix Mendelssohn attended the Berlin University as a matriculated student for more than a year; a vast number of sheets written by him at this period, during the lectures, are still extant.

ler, and have seen the Library, and 'Iphigenia in Aulis.' Hummel has struck out all the octaves, etc.!

FELIX.

Weimar, May 25th, 1830.

I have just received your welcome letter, written on Ascension Day, and cannot resist writing to you again from this place. I will soon send you, dear Fanny, a copy of my symphony; I am having it written out here, and mean to forward it to Leipzig (where perhaps it will be performed), with strict orders to deliver it into your own hands, as soon as possible. Try to collect opinions as to the title I ought to select; Reformation Symphony, Confession Symphony, Symphony for a Church Festival, Juvenile Symphony, or whatever you like. Write to me on this subject, and instead of all manner of stupid suggestions, send me one clever one; still, I should rather like to hear some of the nonsensical ones sure to be devised on the occasion.

Yesterday evening I was at a party at Goethe's, and played alone the whole evening,—the Concert-Stück, the Invitation à la Valse, and Weber's Polonaise in C, my three Welsh pieces, and my Scotch Sonata. It was over by ten o'clock, but I of course stayed till twelve, when we had all sorts of fun, dancing and singing; so you see I lead a most jovial life here. The old gentleman goes to his room regularly at nine o'clock,

and as soon as he is gone, we begin our frolics, and never separate before midnight.

To-morrow my portrait is to be finished; a large black-crayon sketch, and very like; but I look rather sulky. Goethe is so friendly and kind to me, that I don't know how to thank him sufficiently, or what to do to deserve it. In the forenoon he makes me play to him the compositions of the various great masters, in chronological order, for an hour, explaining to him in what respects they have advanced the art, while he sits in a dark corner, like a Jupiter Tonans, his old eyes flashing on me. He did not care to hear anything of Beethoven's, but I told him that I could not let him off, and played the first part of the Symphony in C minor. It seemed to have an extraordinary effect on him; at first he said, "This causes no emotion, nothing but astonishment; it is *grandiose*." He continued grumbling in this way, and after a long pause he began again,—"It is very grand, very wild; it makes one fear that the house is about to fall down; and what must it be when played by a number of men together!" During dinner, in the midst of another subject, he alluded to it again. You know that I dine with him every day, when he questions me very minutely, and is always so gay and communicative after dinner, that we generally remain together alone for an hour, while he speaks on uninterruptedly.

I have no greater pleasure than when he brings out engravings, and explains them to me, or gives his opinion

of Ernani, or Lamartine's Elegies, or the theatre, or pretty girls. He has several times lately invited people, which he rarely does now, so that most of the guests had not seen him for a long time. I then play a great deal, and he compliments me before all these people, and *stupendous* is his favourite expression. To-day he has invited a number of Weimar beauties on my account, because he thinks that I ought to enjoy the society of young people. If I go up to him on such occasions, he says, "My young friend, you must join the ladies, and make yourself agreeable to them." I am not however devoid of tact, so I contrived to have him asked yesterday whether I did not come too often; but he growled out to Ottilie, who put the question to him, that "he must now begin to speak to me in good earnest, for I had such clear ideas, that he hoped to *learn much from me.*" I became twice as tall in my own estimation, when Ottilie repeated this to me. He said so to me himself yesterday; and when he declared that there were many subjects he had at heart that I must explain to him, I *said,* "Oh, certainly!" but I *thought,* "This is an honour I can never forget,"—often it is the very reverse. FELIX.

Munich, June 6th, 1830.

It is a long time since I have written to you, and I fear you may have been anxious on my account. You must not be angry with me, for it was really no fault of

mine, and I have been not a little annoyed about it. I expedited my journey as well as I could, inquiring everywhere about diligences, and invariably receiving false information. I travelled through one night on purpose to enable me to write to you by this day's post, of which I was told at Nürnberg; and when at last I arrive, I find that no post leaves here to-day: it is enough to drive one wild, and I feel out of all patience with Germany, her petty Principalities, with her different coinages, her four-miles-an-hour diligences, and her stormy, rainy, Thuringian forests,—ay, and even with her 'Fidelio' this very evening, for, though dead beat, I must do my duty by going to see it, when I would far rather go to bed. Pray do not be angry with me, or scold me for my delay in writing; I do assure you that this very night, while I was travelling, I saw continually peeping through the clouds the spectre of the scolding which would meet me here; but I shall now proceed to explain why I could not write sooner.

Some days after my last letter from Weimar, I wished, as I told you, to set off for this place, and said so during dinner to Goethe, who made no reply. After dinner however he withdrew with Ottilie into the recess of a window, and said, "You must persuade him to remain." She endeavoured to prevail on me to do so, and walked up and down in the garden with me. I wished however to show that I was a man of determination, so I remained steady to my resolve. Then came the old gentleman himself, and said he saw no use in my being

in such a hurry; that he had still a great deal to tell me, and I had still a great deal to play to him; and what I had told him as to the object of my journey, was really all nonsense,—Weimar was my present object,—and he could not see that I was likely to find in *tables-d'hôte* elsewhere, what I could not obtain here: I would see plenty of hotels in my travels. He talked on in this style, which touched my heart, especially as Ottilie and Ulrike added their persuasions, assuring me that the old gentleman much more often insisted on people going away, than on their remaining, and as no one can be so sure of enjoying a number of happy days, to be able to afford to throw away those that cannot fail to be pleasant, and as they promised to go with me to Jena, I resolved *not* to be a man of determination, and agreed to stay.

Seldom in the course of my life have I so little regretted any resolution as on this occasion, for the following day was by far the most delightful that I ever passed in Goethe's house. After an early drive, I found old Goethe very cheerful; he began to converse on various subjects, passing from the 'Muette de Portici' to Walter Scott, and thence to the beauties in Weimar; to the 'Students,' and the 'Robbers,' and so on to Schiller; then he spoke on uninterruptedly for more than an hour, with the utmost animation, about Schiller's life and writings, and his position in Weimar. He proceeded to speak of the late Grand-Duke, and of the year 1775, which he designated as the intellectual spring

of Germany, declaring that no man living could describe it so well as he could; indeed, it had been his intention to have devoted the second volume of his life to this subject; but what with botany, and meteorology, and other stuff of the same kind, for which no one cared a straw, he had not yet been able to fulfil his purpose. He proceeded to relate various anecdotes of the time when he was director of the theatre, and when I wished to thank him, he said, "It is mere chance, it all comes to light incidentally,—called forth by your welcome presence." These words sounded marvellously pleasant to me; in short, it was one of those conversations that a man can never forget so long as he lives. Next day he made me a present of a sheet of the manuscript of 'Faust,' and at the bottom of the page he wrote, "To my dear young friend F. M. B., mighty, yet delicate master of the piano,—a friendly souvenir of happy May days in 1830. J. W. von Goethe." He also gave me three letters of introduction to take with me.

If that relentless 'Fidelio' did not begin at so early an hour, I could tell you much more, but as it is, I have only time to detail my farewell interview with the old gentleman. At the very beginning of my visit to Weimar, I had spoken of a print by Adrian von Ostade, of a peasant family saying grace, which nine years ago made a deep impression on me. On going at an early hour to take leave of Goethe, I found him seated beside a large portfolio, and he said, "So you are actually going away? I must try to keep all right till you return;

but at all events we won't part now without some pious feelings, so let us once more look at the praying family together." He told me that I must sometimes write to him—(courage! courage! I mean to do so from this very place), and then he embraced me, and we drove off to Jena, where the Frommans received me with singular kindness, and where the same evening I took leave of Ottilie and Ulrike, and came on here.

Nine o'clock.—'Fidelio' is over; and while waiting for supper I add a few words.

Schechner is very much gone off; the quality of her voice has become husky; she repeatedly sang flat, yet there were moments when her expression was so touching, that I wept in my own fashion; all the others were bad, and there was also much to censure in the performance. Still, there is great talent in the orchestra, and the style in which they played the overture was very good. Certainly, our Germany is a strange land; producing great people, but not appreciating them; possessing many fine singers and intellectual artists, but none sufficiently modest and subordinate to render their parts faithfully, and without false pretension. Marzelline introduces all sorts of flourishes into her part; Jaquino is a blockhead; the minister a simpleton: and when a German like Beethoven writes an opera, then comes a German like Stuntz or Poissl (or whoever it may have been) and strikes out the ritournelle, and similar unnecessary passages; another German adds a trombone part to his symphonies; a third declares that

Beethoven is overloaded: and thus is a great man sacrificed.

Farewell! be happy and merry; and may all my heartfelt wishes for you be fulfilled.

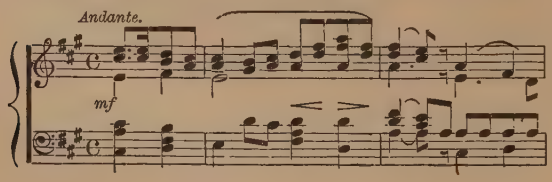
FELIX.

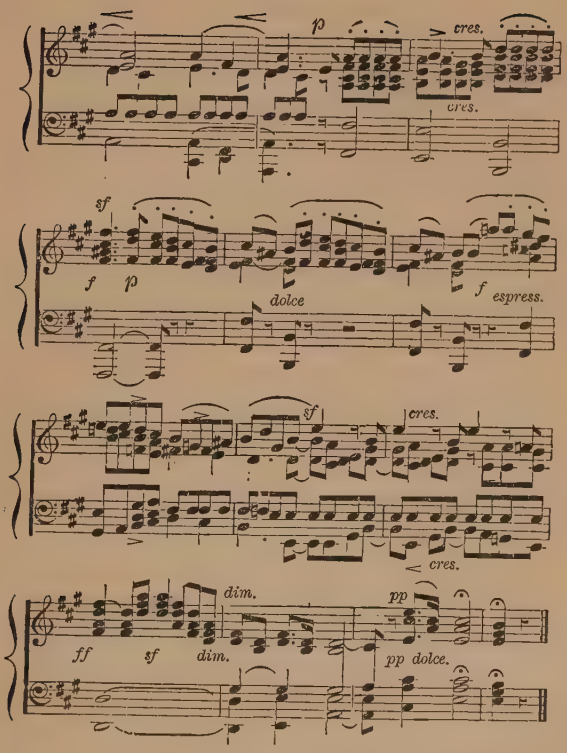
TO FANNY HENSEL.

Munich, June 14th, 1830.

My dearest Sister,

I received your letter of the 5th this morning; I see from it that you are still far from well. I wish I were near you, and could see and chat with you; but as this is impossible, I have written a song for you expressive of my wishes and thoughts. You were in my mind when I composed it, and I was in a tender mood. There is indeed nothing very new in it. You know me well, and what I am; in no respect am I changed, so you may smile at this and rejoice. I could say and wish many other things for you, but none better; and this letter too shall contain nothing else. You know that I am always your own; and may it please God to bestow on you all that I hope and pray.





Linz, August 11th, 1830.

Dearest Mother,

"How the travelling musician passed his day of difficulties in Salzburg." A fragment from the unwritten journal of Count F. M. B. (continuation).

After I had finished my last letter to you, a regular day of misfortunes commenced for me. I took up my pencil, and so entirely destroyed two of my pet sketches, taken in the Bavarian mountains, that I was obliged to tear them from my book, and to throw them out of the window. This provoked me exceedingly; so, to divert my mind, I went to the Capuchin Hill: of course I contrived to lose my way, and at the very moment, when I at last found myself on the summit, it began to rain so furiously that I was forced to run down again with all speed under the shelter of an umbrella. Well! I resolved at all events to have a look at the monastery at the foot of the hill, and had rung the bell, when I suddenly recollected that I had not sufficient money to give the monk who was to show the building, and as this is a kind of thing that they take highly amiss, I hurried away without waiting till the porter appeared.

I then closed my packet of letters for Leipzig, and took it myself to the post, but there I was told, that it must first be examined at the Custom-house; so thither I went. They kept me waiting a whole hour, till they composed a certificate of three lines, and behaved so saucily that I was forced to quarrel with them. Hang Salzburg! thought I; so I ordered horses for Ischl, where I hoped to escape from all my bad luck. No horses were to be had without a permission from the police. I went to the police-office. "No permission can be granted till you bring your passport." Why pursue the subject? After innumerable delays, and

running about hither and thither, the wished-for post carriage arrived. My dinner was over, my luggage ready, and I thought that at last all was in good train: my bill and the servants' fees were paid.

Just as I reached the door, I saw two handsome open carriages approaching at a foot's pace, and the people of the inn hurrying to receive the travellers, who were following on foot. I however paid no attention to the new arrivals, but jumped into my carriage. I observed, that at the same moment, one of the travelling carriages drew up close to mine, and that a lady was seated in it, —but what a lady! That you may not instantly jump to the conclusion that I had suddenly fallen in love, which would have been the crown of my ill luck, I must premise that the lady was elderly, but she looked very amiable and kind, wore a black dress, and a massive gold chain, and smiled good-humouredly when she paid the postilion his fee. Heaven knows why I fidgeted so long about my luggage instead of driving off. I kept glancing across at the other carriage, and stranger though the lady was, I felt as if I could not help addressing her. It may have been mere imagination on my part, but I do think that she too glanced at the dusty traveller in his student's cap. When at length she got out of her carriage on my side, and stood close to the door of mine, on which she leaned her hand, I required all my well-regulated travelling propriety not to get out myself and say, "Pray, Madam, may I ask your name?" Propriety however conquered, and I called out with an air

of authority, "Postilion! go on!" whereupon the lady quickly withdrew her hand, and we set off. I felt out of humour with everything, and while thinking over the events of the day, I fell asleep.

A carriage with two gentlemen passing us, woke me up, and the following dialogue ensued between the postilion and myself. *I.* These gentlemen are coming from Ischl, so I shall probably find no horses there. *He.* Oh! the two carriages that stopped at the Inn were also from Ischl; still there is no doubt you will get horses. *I.* Are you sure they came from Ischl? *He.* Quite sure: they go there every year, and were here last summer also; I drove them. It is a baroness from Vienna, (Heavens! thought I,) and she is dreadfully rich, and has such handsome daughters. When they went to Berchtesgaden to visit the mines, I drove them, and very nice they looked in their miners' dresses: they have an estate too, and yet they speak to people like us quite familiarly. Halt! cried I; what name?—Don't know.—Pereira?*—Not sure.—Drive back,—said I in a resolute tone.—If I do, we shall not reach Ischl to-night, and we have got over the worst hill; you can learn the name at the next stage.—I hesitated, and we drove on. They did not know the name at the next stage, nor at the following one either. At length, at the end of seven long wearisome hours we arrived, and before I left the carriage, I said, who were the party who drove to Salzburg this morning in two carriages?

* A relation of the family.

and received the quiet reply,—Baroness Pereira; she proceeds to Gastein early to-morrow morning, but returns four or five days hence. Now I had arrived at a certainty, and I also spoke to her driver, who said that none of the family were here. The two gentlemen I met in a carriage on the road, were sons of the Baroness (the very two I had never seen). In addition to all this, I remembered a wretched portrait that I had once got a glimpse of at our aunt H——'s, and the lady in the black dress was Baroness Pereira! Heaven knows when I may have another opportunity of seeing her! I do not think that she ever could have made a more pleasing impression on me, and I shall not assuredly soon forget her attractive appearance, and her kind expression of countenance.

How strange presentiments are; they are things we all experience, but only recognize their import when too late. I would have returned then and there, and travelled through the night, but I reflected that I should only overtake her at the very moment of her departure. or that possibly she might have left Salzburg before my arrival, and that I should thus frustrate all the plan of my journey to Vienna. At one moment I thought of going to Gastein, but I could not help feeling that Salzburg had treated me very badly, so I once more said adieu, and went to bed thoroughly crest-fallen. Next morning I desired that her empty house should be pointed out to me, and made a sketch of it for you, dear mother. My bad luck, however, was still mutter-

ing in the distance, for I could find no favourable spot to take my sketch from. Besides, they charged me more than a ducat at the inn for one night's entertainment, etc. etc. I swore both in English and German, and drove away, laying aside among the things of the past, Ischl, Salzburg, Baroness Pereira, and the Traunsee; and so I came on here, where I have taken a day's rest.

To-morrow I intend to pursue my journey, and (D.V.) to sleep in Vienna the day after. I will write to you further from thence. Thus ended my day of misfortunes; "truth, and *no* poetry," not even the leaning the hand against the door of my carriage, is invention; all is a portrait taken from life. The most incomprehensible thing is that I should have totally overlooked Flora, who it seems was also there, for the old lady in a tartan cloak, who went into the inn, was Frau von W——, and the old gentleman with green spectacles who followed her, could not well have been Flora? In short, when things once take a wrong turn, they will have their course. I can write no more to-day, for my disappointment is still too recent; in my next letter I will describe the Salzkammergut, and all the beauties of my journey yesterday. How right Devrient was to advise me to take this route! The Traunstein also, and the Traun Falls, are wonderfully fine; and after all, the world is a very pleasant world, and it is fortunate for me that you are in it, and that I shall find letters from you the day after to-morrow, and

possibly much that is agreeable besides. Dear Fanny, I mean now to compose my *Non nobis,* and the Symphony in A minor. Dear Rebecca, if you could hear me singing "Im warmen Thal" in a quavering voice, you would think it rather deplorable; you could sing it better. Oh, Paul! do you mean to say that you understand the Schein Gulden, W.W. Gulden, heavy Gulden, light Gulden, Conventions Gulden, and the devil and his grandmother's Gulden? If you do, I don't, and therefore wish you were with me, and perhaps for more reasons than one. Farewell!

Presburg, September 27th, 1830.

Dear Brother,

Peals of bells, drums and music, carriages on carriages, people hurrying in all directions, everywhere gay crowds, such is the general aspect around me, for to-morrow is to be the coronation of the King, which since yesterday the whole city has been watching for, and praying Heaven for a bright cheery day, inasmuch as the grand ceremony which ought to have taken place yesterday had to be deferred on account of the torrents of rain. Since the afternoon the sky has been blue and beautiful, and the moon is now shining down tranquilly on the tumult of the city. To-morrow at a very early hour the Crown Prince is to take his oaths (as King of Hungary) in the large Market-place; he is then to go to church in grand procession, attended by a whole

array of bishops and magnates, and finally to ride up the Königsberg, which lies opposite my windows, and there on the banks of the Danube, to wave his sword towards the four quarters of the globe, in token that he takes possession of his new realm.

This little excursion has made me acquainted with a new country; for Hungary with her magnates, her high dignitaries, her Oriental luxury, side by side with her barbarism, is to be seen here, and the streets offer a spectacle which is to me both novel and striking. We really seem here to approach closer to the East; the miserably obtuse peasants or serfs; the troops of gipsies; the equipages and retainers of the nobles overloaded with gold and gems (for the grandees themselves are only visible through the closed windows of their carriages); then the singularly bold national physiognomy, the yellow hue, the long moustaches, the soft foreign idiom—all this makes the most motley impression in the world.

Early yesterday I went alone through the streets. First came a long array of merry soldiery, on spirited little horses; behind them a crew of gipsies, making music; succeeded by Vienna fashionables, with eye-glasses and kid gloves, conversing with a Capuchin monk; then a couple of uncivilized peasants in long white coats, their hats pressed down on their foreheads, and their straight black hair cut even all round, (they have russet complexions, a languid gait, and an indescribable expression of savage stupidity and

indifference); then came a couple of sharp, acute-looking divinity students in their long blue coats, walking arm-in-arm; Hungarian proprietors in their dark-blue national costume; court servants; and numbers of carriages every moment arriving, covered with mud. I followed the crowd as they slowly moved on up the hill, and so at last reached the dilapidated castle, which commands an extensive view of the whole city and the Danube. People were looking down on all sides from the ancient white walls, and from the towers and balconies; in every corner boys were scribbling their names on the walls for the benefit of posterity; in a small chamber (perhaps once on a time a chapel, or a sleeping apartment) an ox was being roasted whole, and as it turned on the spit, the people shouted with delight; a battery of cannons bristled before the castle, destined to bellow forth their appropriate thunders at the coronation.

Below, on the Danube, which runs very rapidly here, darting with the speed of an arrow through the pontoon bridge, lay the new steamer, that had just arrived, laden with strangers; then the extensive view of the flat but wooded country, and meadows overflowed by the Danube; of the embankments and streets swarming with human beings, and mountains clothed from crown to base with Hungarian vines—all this was not a little strange and foreign. Then the pleasant contrast of living in the same house with the best and most friendly people in the world, and finding novelty doubly inter-

esting in their society. These were really among the happy days, dear brother, that a kind Providence so often and so richly bestows on me.

September 28th, one o'clock.

The King is crowned—the ceremony was wonderfully fine. How can I even try to describe it to you? An hour hence we all drive back to Vienna, and thence I pursue my journey. There is a tremendous uproar under my windows, and the Burgher-guards are flocking together, but only for the purpose of shouting "*Vivat!*" I pushed my way through the crowd, while our ladies saw everything from the windows, and never can I forget the effect of all this brilliant and almost fabulous magnificence.

In the great square of the Hospitallers the people were closely packed together, for there the oaths were to be taken on a platform hung with cloth; and afterwards the people were to be allowed the privilege of tearing down the cloth for their own use; close by was a fountain spouting red and white Hungarian wine. The grenadiers could not keep back the people; one unlucky hackney coach that stopped for a moment was instantly covered with men, who clambered on the spokes of the wheels, and on the roof, and on the box, swarming on it like ants, so that the coachman, unable to drive on without becoming a murderer, was forced to wait quietly where he was. When the procession arrived, which was received bare-headed, I had the utmost difficulty in taking off my hat, and holding it

above my head; an old Hungarian, however, behind me, whose view it intercepted, quickly devised a remedy, for without ceremony he made a snatch at my unlucky hat, and in an instant flattened it to the size of a cap; then they yelled as if they had all been spitted, and fought for the cloth; in short they were a mob; but my Magyars! the fellows look as if they were born noblemen, and privileged to live at ease, looking very melancholy, but riding like the devil.

When the procession descended the hill, first came the court servants, covered with embroidery, the trumpeters and kettle-drums, the heralds and all that class, and then suddenly galloped along the street a mad Count, *en pleine carrière,* his horse plunging and capering, and the caparisons edged with gold; the Count himself a mass of diamonds, rare heron's plumes, and velvet embroidery (though he had not yet assumed his state uniform, being bound to ride so madly—Count Sandor is the name of this furious cavalier). He had an ivory sceptre in his hand with which he urged on his horse, causing it each time to rear, and to make a tremendous bound forward.

When his wild career was over, a procession of about sixty more magnates arrived, all in the same fantastic splendour, with handsome coloured turbans, twisted moustaches, and dark eyes. One rode a white horse covered with a gold net; another a dark grey, the bridle studded with diamonds; then came a black charger with purple trappings. One magnate was attired from head

to foot in sky blue, thickly embroidered with gold. a white turban, and a long white dolman; another in cloth of gold, with a purple dolman; each one more rich and gaudy than the other, and all riding so boldly and fearlessly, and with so much dash, that it was quite a pleasure to look at them. At length came the Hungarian Guards, with Esterhazy at their head, dazzling in gems and pearl embroidery. How can I describe the scene? You ought to have seen the procession deploy and halt in the spacious square, and all the jewels and bright colours, and the lofty golden mitres of the bishops, and the crucifixes glittering in the brilliant sunshine like a thousand stars!

Well, to-morrow, God willing, I proceed on my journey. Now, dear brother, you have a letter, so pray write soon, and let me hear how you are getting on. So you have had an *emeute* in Berlin? and that, too, an *emeute* of journeymen tailors? What did it all mean? Once more I send you my farewell from Germany, my dear parents, and brother and sisters. I am leaving Hungary for Italy, and thence I hope to write to you more frequently and more at leisure. Be of good cheer, dear Paul, and go forwards in a confident spirit; rejoice with those that rejoice, and do not forget the brother who is wandering about the world.—Yours,

FELIX.

Venice, October 10th, 1830.

Italy at last! and what I have all my life looked forward to as the greatest possible felicity, is now begun and I am basking in it. The day has been so fruitful in enjoyment, that I must, now that it is evening, endeavour to collect my thoughts a little to write to you, my dear parents, and to thank you for having bestowed such happiness on me. You also, my dear brother and sisters, are often in my thoughts. How much I wish for you, Paul, to be with me here, once more to enjoy your delight in our rapid travels by sea and by land; and I should like to prove to you, Hensel, that the "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin" is the most divine work ever produced by the hands of man. You are not here, however, so I am obliged to give vent to my enthusiasm in bad Italian to the *laquais de place,* who stands still and listens.

I shall however become quite bewildered, if things are to go on as they have done on this first day, when every hour brought with it so much never to be forgotten, that I do not know where to find senses sufficient to comprehend it all properly. I saw the "Assumption," then a whole gallery of paintings in the Manfrini Palace; then a festival in the church where hangs Titian's St. Peter; afterwards St. Mark's, and in the afternoon I had a row on the Adriatic, and visited the public gardens, where the people lie on the grass and eat. I then returned to the Piazza of St. Mark, where in the twilight there is always an immense crowd

and crush of people; and all this I was obliged to see to-day, because there is so much that is novel and interesting to be seen to-morrow.

But I must now relate methodically how I came hither by water, (for, as Telemachus says, to do so by land would be no easy matter,) and so I begin my history at Gratz, which is certainly the most tiresome hole in the world, and admirably adapted to promote yawning; and why should I have stayed a single day longer, on account of a (he) relation? How can a traveller who knows the mother and sister to be charming, put up with a brother, who is also an ensign, in their stead? In short, the man did not know what to do with me, for which I forgive him freely, and shall not defame him to his mother, when I perform my promise and write to her; but I do not forgive him for taking me to the Theatre to see the 'Roebuck,' the most wretched, trashy, objectionable piece that that precious Kotzebue ever wrote; and moreover for pronouncing it very clever and piquant, for this 'Roebuck' is so high-flavoured as to be scarcely fit for a cat. At all events I have left Gratz, for here I am in Venice.

My old vetturino woke me up at four o'clock in the dark, and the horse crawled off with us both. I thought of you, dear Father, at least a hundred times during our journey of two days. You would certainly have gone wild with impatience, and possibly assaulted the coachman too, for at every little declivity, he got slowly off the box, deliberately put on the drag, and crept up the

smallest hill at a snail's pace; then he thought fit to walk beside his horses for a time, to stretch his legs: every possible conveyance passed us on the road, even when drawn by dogs or donkeys, and when at last, at a steep hill, the fellow put on two oxen as leaders, whose pace exactly corresponded with that of his horse, I had the greatest difficulty in not belabouring him, indeed I did so more than once; but he then gravely assured me that we were going at a capital pace, and I had no means of proving the contrary. Moreover he always put up for the night in the most detestable pot-houses, starting again at four o'clock in the morning, so that on arriving at Klagenfurt I was fairly worn out; but when in answer to my question as to the time the Venetian diligence set out, I received the answer,—in an hour hence,—I seemed to revive. I was promised a place, and I also got a good supper. The diligence, indeed, did not arrive for two hours after its time, having been detained by deep snow on the Sömmering, but still it came at last. Three Italians were inside, who did their best to chatter away my sleep, but my snoring fairly silenced them after a time.

At last morning broke, and as we drove into Resciutta, the driver said, that on the other side of the bridge there, no one understood a word of German. I therefore took leave of my mother tongue for a long time to come, and we drove over the bridge. The style of the houses immediately beyond was entirely different. The flat roofs with their convex tiles, the deep windows, the

high white walls, and lofty square towers, all betokened another land. The pale olive faces of the men, the innumerable beggars who besieged the carriage, the various small chapels, brightly and carefully painted on every side with flowers, nuns, monks, and so forth, were all symptomatic of Italy. The monotonous character of the whole scenery however, and of the road we were travelling, passing through bare white rocks along the banks of a river with a rough rocky bed, in summer creeping along in the form of a tiny brook, certainly did not seem characteristic of Italy. "I purposely made this passage rather meagre, in order that the *subject* might be more distinctly heard," says Abt Vogler; and I almost think that Providence has done pretty much the same here, for when we had passed Ospedaletto the *subject* did come out well, and a fine sight it was. I had imagined that the first impression of Italy would be like that of a sudden explosion, violent and startling; I have not hitherto found this to be the case. The effect produced on me has been rather that of a genial warmth, mildness and cheerfulness, and an indescribable sensation of pervading content and satisfaction.

After passing Ospedaletto we entered a plain, leaving the blue mountains behind us; the sun shone bright and warm through the foliage of the vines; the road winding through orchards, in which the trees were connected by trailing boughs. I felt as if I were at home again, and knew every object, and was once more about to take possession of it all. The carriage too seemed

to *fly* over the smooth road, and towards evening we arrived at Udine, where we passed the night, when for the first time I ordered my supper in Italian, my tongue slipping as if on ice, one moment into English, and the next stumbling afresh. Moreover next morning I was famously cheated, but I did not in the least care, and on we went. It happened to be Sunday, and on every side people were coming along, in bright southern costumes, and flowers; the women with roses in their hair. Light, single-horse carriages drove past, and men were riding to church on donkeys; at the inns, groups of idlers were to be seen in the most picturesque, indolent attitudes: among others, one man placed his arm quietly round his wife's waist, and swung round with her, and then they went on their way; this sounds trivial enough, and yet it had a pretty effect. Venetian villas now were occasionally visible from the road, and by degrees became more frequent, till at length our way led past houses, trees, and gardens, like a park. The whole country had such a festive air, that I seemed to feel as if I were myself a Prince making his grand entry, and the vine-branches with their rich purple grapes hanging in festoons from the trees, made the most lovely of all festive wreaths. The inhabitants were all gaily dressed and adorned, and a few scattered cypresses only enhanced the general effect.

In Treviso there was an illumination, paper lanterns suspended in every part of the great square, and a large gaudy transparency in the centre. Some most lovely

girls were walking about, in their long white veils and scarlet petticoats. It was quite dark when we arrived at Mestre last night, when we got into a boat, and in a dead calm, gently rowed across to Venice. On our passage thither, where nothing but water is to be seen, and distant lights, we saw a small rock which stands in the midst of the sea; on this a lamp was burning; all the sailors took off their hats as we passed, and one of them said, this was the "Madonna of Tempests," which are often most dangerous and violent here. We then glided quietly into the great city, under innumerable bridges, without sound of post-horns, or rattling of wheels, or toll-keepers; the passage now became more thronged, and numbers of ships were lying near; past the theatre, where gondolas in long rows lie waiting for their masters, just as our own carriages do at home, then into the great canal, past the church of St. Mark, the Lions, the palace of the Doges, and the Bridge of Sighs. The obscurity of night only enhanced my delight on hearing the familiar names and seeing the dark outlines.

And so I am actually in Venice! Only think: to-day I have gazed upon the finest pictures in the world, and have at last personally made the acquaintance of a very admirable man, whom hitherto I only knew by name—I allude to a certain Signor Giorgione, a splendid fellow—and also to Pordenone, who displays the most noble pictures, and portrays both himself and many of his simple scholars, in such a devout, faithful, and pious

spirit, that you seem to converse with and grow fond of him. Who would not have been confused by all this? But if I am to speak of Titian, I must do so in a more reverent mood. Till now, I never knew that he was the felicitous artist I have this day seen him to be. That he thoroughly enjoyed life, in all its beauty and fulness, the picture in Paris proves; but he has fathomed the depths of human sorrow, as well as the joys of Heaven. His glorious "Entombment," and also the "Assumption," fully evince this. How Mary floats on the cloud, while an actual *air* seems to pervade the whole picture; how you see at a glance her very breathing, her awe her devotion, and in short a thousand feelings,—all words seem poor and commonplace in comparison! The three heads of angels too, on the right of the picture, are of the highest order of beauty,—pure, serene loveliness, so unconscious, so bright and so seraphic. But no more of this! or I must perforce become poetical, if I be not so already, and that is a mood which does not at all suit me. I shall certainly see that picture every day.

I must however say a few words about the "Entombment," as you have the engraving. Look at it, and think of me. This picture represents the conclusion of a great tragedy: so still, so grand, and so acutely painful. Magdalene is supporting Mary, fearing that she will die of anguish; she endeavours to lead her away, but looks round herself once more, evidently wishing to imprint this spectacle indelibly on her heart, feeling that it is for the last time; it surpasses every-

thing; and the sorrowing John, who considers and sympathizes still more with Mary; and Joseph, who absorbed in devotion, and occupied with the tomb, manifestly directs and conducts the whole; and Christ himself, lying there so tranquil, having endured to the end: then the blaze of brilliant colour, and the dark-streaked sky! It is a picture that speaks to my heart and fills me with enthusiasm, and will never leave my memory.

I believe few things I have yet to see in Italy will affect me so deeply; but you know that I am devoid of all prejudices, and I give you a fresh proof of this by telling you that the Martyrdom of St. Peter, from which I expected the most, pleased me the least of the three: it did not strike me as being so complete a whole; the landscape, which is very fine, seemed to me to predominate too much. I was dissatisfied also with the disposition in the picture of *two* victims and only *one* murderer; (for the small figure in the distant background does not remedy this). I could not bring myself to consider it a martyrdom. But probably I am in error, and I intend to study it more carefully to-morrow: my contemplation of it, besides, was disturbed by some one strumming most sacrilegiously on the organ; and these saintly forms were forced to listen to such miserable opera *finales!* No matter; where such pictures are, I need no organist. I play the organ myself in my thoughts, and feel as little irritated by such trash, as I should be by an ignorant rabble. What a man that

Titian was! Every one must be edified by his works, as I shall try to be, and I rejoice that I am in Italy. At this moment the gondoliers are shouting to each other, and the lights are reflected in the depths of the waters; one man is playing a guitar, and singing to it. It is a charming night. Farewell! and think of me in every happy hour as I do of you.

FELIX.

TO PROFESSOR ZELTER.*

Venice, October 16th, 1830.

Dear Professor,

I have entered Italy at last, and I intend this letter to be the commencement of a regular series of reports, which I purpose transmitting to you, of all that appears to me particularly worthy of notice. Though I only now for the first time write to you, I must beg you to impute the blame to the state of constant excitement in which I lived, both in Munich and in Vienna. It was needless for me to describe to you the parties in Munich, which I attended every evening, and where I played the piano more unremittingly than I ever did in my life before; one *soirée* succeeding another so closely, that I really had not a moment to collect my thoughts. Moreover, it would not have particularly interested you, for after all, "good society which does not offer materials

* Mendelssohn's instructor in the theory of music.

for the smallest epigram," is equally vapid in a letter. I hope that you have not taken amiss my long silence, and that I may expect a few lines from you, even if they contain nothing save that you are well and cheerful.

The aspect of the world at this moment is very bleak and stormy, and much that was thought durable and unchangeable, seems to fall to pieces in the course of a couple of days. It is then doubly welcome to hear well-known voices, to convince us that there are certain things which cannot be annihilated or demolished, but remain firm and steadfast; and as at this moment I am very uneasy at not having received any news from home for the last four weeks, and at finding no letters from my family, either at Trieste or here, so a few lines from you, written in your old fashion, would both cheer and gratify me, especially as they would prove that you think of me with the same kindness that you have always done from my childhood to the present time.

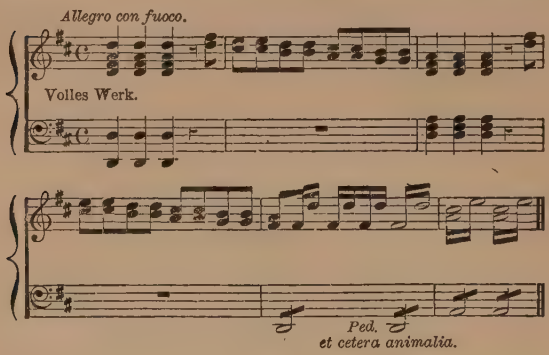
My family have no doubt told you of the exhilarating impression made on me by the first sight of the plains of Italy. I hurry from one enjoyment to another hour by hour, and constantly see something novel and fresh; but immediately on my arrival I discovered some masterpieces of art, which I study with deep attention, and contemplate daily for a couple of hours at least. These are three pictures by Titian,—the "Presentation of Mary as a Child in the Temple;" the "Assumption of the Virgin;" and the "Entombment of Christ." There is also a portrait by Giorgione, representing a girl with

a cithern in her hand, lost in thought, and looking forth from the picture in serious meditation (she is apparently about to begin a song, and you feel as if you must do the same) : besides many others.

To see these alone would be worth a journey to Venice; for the fruitfulness, genius, and devotion of the great men who painted these pictures, seem to emanate from them afresh as often as you gaze at their works, and I do not much regret having scarcely heard any music here; for I suppose I must not venture to include the music of the angels, in the "Assumption," encircling Mary with joyous shouts of welcome; one beating the tambourine, a couple of others blowing away on strange crooked flutes, another lovely group singing—or the music floating in the thoughts of the cithern player. I have only once heard anything on the organ, and miserable it was. I was gazing at Titian's "Martyrdom of St. Peter" in the Franciscan Church. Divine service was going on, and nothing inspires me with more solemn awe than when on the very spot for which they were originally designed and painted, those ancient pictures in all their grandeur, gradually steal forth out of the darkness in which the long lapse of time has veiled them.

As I was earnestly contemplating the wondrous evening landscape with its trees, and angels among the boughs, the organ commenced. The first sound was quite in harmony with my feelings: but the second, third, and in fact all the rest, quickly roused me from

my reveries, and restored me to my senses, for this is what the fellow was playing in church and during divine service, and in the presence of respectable people:



and the "Martyrdom of St Peter" actually stood by his side! I was therefore in no great hurry to make the acquaintance of the organist. There is no regular Opera here at this moment, and the gondoliers no longer sing Tasso's stanzas; moreover, what I have hitherto seen of modern Venetian art, consists of poems framed and glazed on the subject of Titian's pictures, or Rinaldo and Armida, by a new Venetian painter, or a St. Cecilia by a ditto, besides various specimens of architecture in no style at all; as all these are totally insignificant, I cling to the ancient masters, and study how they worked. Often, in so doing, I have felt musically inclined, and have been composing industriously during my stay.

Before I left Vienna, a friend of mine made me a present of Luther's Hymns, and on reading them over

I was again so much struck by their power, that I intend to harmonize several of them this winter. In pursuance of this plan I have nearly completed here the choral "Aus tiefer Noth," for four voices *a capella;* and the Christmas hymn, "Vom Himmel hoch," is already in my head. I purpose also arranging the following: "Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein," "Wir glauben all' an einen Gott," "Verleih uns Frieden," "Mitten wir im Leben sind," and finally "Ein' feste Burg." All these last, however, it is my intention to compose for a choir and orchestra. Pray write to me about this project of mine, and say whether you approve of my retaining the ancient melodies in them all, without adhering to them too strictly: for instance, if I were to take the first verse of "Vom Himmel hoch" as a separate grand chorus. Besides this, I am at work upon an orchestral overture, which will come in well if an opportunity for an opera should offer.

I finished two little sacred pieces in Vienna—a choral in three movements for chorus and orchestra ("O! Haupt voll Blut und Wunden") and an Ave Maria for a choir of eight voices, *a capella.* The people I associated with there were so dissipated and frivolous, that I became quite spiritually-minded, and conducted myself like a divine among them. Moreover, not one of the best pianoforte players there, male or female, ever played a note of Beethoven, and when I hinted that he and Mozart were not to be despised, they said, "So you are an admirer of classical music?" "Yes," said I

To-morrow I intend to go to Bologna to have a glance at the St. Cecilia, and then proceed by Florence to Rome, where I hope (D.V.) to arrive eight or ten days hence. I will then write to you more satisfactorily. I only wished to make a beginning to-day, and to beg you not to forget me, and kindly to accept my heartfelt wishes for your health and happiness.

Your faithful

FELIX.

Florence, October 23rd, 1830.

Here am I in Florence, the air warm and the sky bright; everything is beautiful and glorious, "wo blieb die Erde," as Goethe says. I have now received your letter of the 3rd, by which I see that you are all well, that my anxiety was needless, that you are all going on as usual, and thinking of me; so I feel happy again, and can now see everything, and enjoy everything, and am able to write to you; in short, my mind is at rest on the main point. I made my journey here amid a thousand doubts and fears, quite uncertain whether to go direct to Rome, because I did not expect any letters at Florence. Fortunately, however, I decided on coming here, and now it is of no consequence how the misunderstanding arose, that caused me to wait for letters in Venice, while you had written to Florence; all I can promise is to endeavour in future to be less over-anxious. My driver pointed out a spot between the hills, on which

lay a blue mist, and said "*Ecco Firenze!*" I eagerly looked towards the place, and saw the round dome looming out of the mist before me, and the spacious wide valley in which the city is situated. My love of travel revived when at last Florence came in sight. I looked at some willow-trees (as I thought) beside the road, when the driver said, "Buon olio," and then I saw that they were hanging full of olives.

The vetturino, as a genus, is undoubtedly an unmitigated knave, thief, and impostor; he has cheated me and half-starved me, and yet I think him almost amiable from his enthusiastic animal nature. About an hour before we arrived in Florence he said that the beautiful scenery was now about to commence; and true it is that the fair land of Italy does first begin then. There are villas on every height, and decorated old walls, above which clusters of roses and aloes, vines above the flowers, and above the vines the olive leaves, the pointed cypress, and the flat topped pine are all sharply defined against the sky; then handsome chiselled faces, busy life on the roads on every side, and the blue city down the distant vale.

So I drove confidently into Florence in my little open carriage, and though I looked shabby and dusty, like one coming from the Apennines, I cared little for that. I passed gaily by all the smart equipages from which the most refined English ladies looked at me; while I thought it may one day actually come to pass that you who are now looking down on the *roturier*, may shake

hands with him, the only difference being a little clean linen and so forth. By the time that we came to the *Battisterio,* I no longer felt diffident, but gave orders to drive to the Post, and then I was really happy, for I received three letters,—yours of the 22nd and the 3rd, and my father's also. I was now quite delighted, and as we drove along beside the Arno, to Schneider's celebrated hotel, the world seemed once more a very pleasant world.

October 24th.

The Apennines are really not so beautiful as I had imagined; for the name always suggested to me richly wooded, picturesque hills covered with vegetation, whereas they are merely a long chain of melancholy bleak hills; the scanty verdure that there is unpleasing. The dwellings few, no merry brooks or rivers; at best an occasional rill trickling down the broad dried-up bed of a mountain torrent; and then the scandalous roguery of the inhabitants: really, at last, I became quite confused and perplexed by their incessant cheating, and could scarcely discover for what object they were lying. I therefore, once for all, invariably protested against every demand they made, and declared that I would not pay at all if they asked more than I chose to give; so in this way I managed very tolerably.

Last night I was again in grand quarters: I had made an agreement with the vetturino for board and lodging, and all I required. The natural consequence was, that the fellow took me to the most detestable little inns,

and actually starved me. For instance, late one evening we arrived at a solitary pothouse, the filth of which no pen can describe. The stair was strewed with heaps of dead leaves and firewood; moreover the cold was intense, and they invited me to warm myself in the kitchen, which I agreed to do. A bench was placed for me beside the fire; a whole troop of peasants were standing about, also warming themselves. I looked quite regal from my bench on the hearth among this rough set of fellows, who, in their broad-leaved hats, lit up by the fire, and babbling in their incomprehensible dialect, looked vastly suspicious characters. I made them prepare my soup under my own eyes, giving moreover good advice on the subject; but, after all, it was not eatable.

I entered into conversation with my subjects from my throne on the hearth, and they pointed out to me a little hill in the distance incessantly vomiting forth flames, which had a singular effect in the dark ("Raticosa" is the name of the hill), and then I was conducted to my bed-room. The landlord took hold of the sackcloth sheets, and said, "Very fine linen!" but I slept as soundly as a bear, and before falling asleep I said to myself, Now you are in the Apennines: and next morning, after getting no breakfast, my vetturino civilly asked me how I liked my night's entertainment. The fellow talked a great deal of nonsense about politics, and the present state of France, abused his horse in German for being born in Switzerland, and spoke French to the

beggars who swarmed round the cabriolet, while I corrected many a fault in his pronunciation.

October 25th.

I now intend to go once more to the Tribune, to be inspired with feelings of reverence. There is a particular place where I like to sit, as the little Venus de' Medici is directly opposite, and above, that of Titian, and by turning rather to the left, I have a view of the Madonna del Cardello, a favourite picture of mine, and which forcibly reminds me of *la belle Jardinière*, to which it seems a companion picture; and also the Fornarina, which made no great impression on me from the first, for I know the engraving, which is very faithful, and the face has, I think, a most disagreeable, and even ordinary expression. In gazing thus, however, at the two Venuses, their loveliness inspires a feeling of piety; it is as if the two spirits who could produce such creations, were flying through the hall and grasping you as they passed.

Titian must have been a marvellous man, and enjoyed his life in his works; still the Venus de Medici is not to be slighted, and then the divine Niobe with all her children: while we gaze at her, we can find no words. I have not yet been to the Pitti Palace, which contains the Ezekiel, and the Madonna della Sedia, of Raphael. I saw the gardens of the palace yesterday in sunshine; they are superb, and the dense foliage of the myrtles and laurels, and the innumerable cypresses, made a strange exotic impression on me; but when I declare

that I consider beeches, limes, oaks, and firs, ten times more beautiful and picturesque, I think I hear Hensel exclaim, "Oh, the northern bear!"

October 30th.

After the soft rain of yesterday, the air is so mild and genial, that I am at this moment seated at the open window writing to you; and indeed it is pleasant enough to see the people going about the streets, offering the prettiest baskets of flowers, fresh violets, roses, and pinks. Two days ago, being satiated with all pictures, statues, vases, and museums, I resolved at midday to take a long walk till after sunset; so after buying a bunch of narcissuses and heliotropes, I went up the hill through the vineyards. It was one of the most delightful walks I ever remember; every one must feel revived and refreshed at the sight of nature in such a garb as this, and a thousand happy thoughts passed through my mind.

First of all, I went to a villa called Bello Sguardo, whence the whole of Florence and its spacious valley are to be seen, and I thoroughly enjoyed the view of the superb city and its massive towers and palaces. But most of all I admired the countless villas, covering every hill and every acclivity as far as the eye can reach, as if the city extended beyond the mountains into the far distance. And when I took up a telescope and looked down on the valley through the blue haze, every portion of it seemed thickly dotted with bright objects and white villas, while such a large circle of dwellings inspired me with a feeling of home and comfort.

I proceeded far over the hills to the highest point I could see, on which stood an ancient tower, on reaching which I found all the people throughout the building busily engaged in making wine, drying grapes, and repairing casks. It proved to be Galileo's tower, from which he used to make his discoveries and observations; from hence also there was a very extensive view, and the girl who took me to the roof of the tower related a number of stories in her peculiar dialect, which I scarcely understood at all; but she afterwards presented me with some of her sweet dried grapes, which I ate with great gusto. And so I went on to another tower I saw at a distance, but could not manage to find my way; and examining my map as I went along, I stumbled on a fellow-tourist busily searching his map also; the only difference between us being, that he was an old Frenchman with green spectacles, who addressed me thus, "È questo S. Miniato al Monte, Signor?" With admirable decision I replied, "Sì, Signor;" and it turned out that I was right. A. F—— immediately recurred to my memory, as she had advised me to see this monastery, which is indeed wonderfully fine.

When I tell you that I went thence to the Boboli Gardens, where I saw the sun set, and at night enjoyed the brightest moonlight, you may imagine how much I was invigorated by my ramble. I will write to you about the pictures here some other time, for to-day it is too late, as I have still to take leave of the Pitti Palace and the great Gallery, and to gaze once more at my

Venus, on whose charms one cannot expatiate before ladies, but whose beauty is truly divine. The courier goes at five o'clock, and, God willing, I shall be in Rome early the day after to-morrow. From thence you shall hear again.

FELIX.

Rome, November 2nd, 1830.

* . . . I refrain from writing longer in this melancholy strain; for just as your letter, after the lapse of fourteen days, has saddened me, my answer will have the same effect on you fourteen days hence. You would write to me in the same style, and so it might go on for ever. As four weeks must pass before I can receive any answer, I feel that I ought to restrict myself to relating events past and present, and not dwell much on the particular frame of my mind at the moment, which is indeed usually sufficiently manifest in the narrative given, and the various occurrences described.

I have scarcely yet arrived at the conviction that I am now actually in Rome; and when yesterday, just as day was breaking, I drove across a bridge with statues, under a deep blue sky, and in dazzling white moonlight, and the courier said, "Ponte Molle," it all seemed to me like a dream, and at the same moment I saw before me my sick-bed in London a year ago, and my rough

* The part of this letter here omitted refers to the illness of a female relative.

Scotch journey, and Munich, and Vienna, and the pines on these hills. The journey from Florence to Rome has very few attractions. Siena, which is, I understand, worth seeing, we passed through during the night. It was unpleasant to see a regular Government courier compelled to take a military escort, which was doubled at night; still it must be absolutely necessary, as he is obliged to pay for it. In these days this ought not to be the case. In the meantime everything progresses, and there are moments when the bound forwards is actually visible.

I was still in Florence, waiting for the departure of the post, reading a French newspaper, when at the very moment the bell sounded, I read among the advertisements, "Vie de Siebenkase, par Jean Paul." Many reflections occurred to me as to so many men of renown gradually vanishing from our sight, and our great geniuses having such homage paid to them after their death, while during their *life*, Lafontaine's novels and French vaudevilles alone make any impression on their fellow-countrymen; while *we* only strive to appreciate the very refuse of the French, and neglect Beaumarchais and Rousseau. However, it matters little after all.

The first thing connected with music that I met with here, was the "Death of Christ," by Graun, which an Abbate here, Fortunato Santini, has translated faithfully and admirably into Italian. It appears that the music of this heretic has been sent along with the translation to Naples, where it is to be produced this winter

at a great festival, and I hear that the musical world there are quite enchanted with it, and are studying the work with infinite love and enthusiasm. I understand that the Abbate has been long impatiently expecting me, because he hopes to obtain considerable information from me about German music, and thinks I may also have the score of Bach's "Passion." Thus music progresses onwards, as sure to pierce through as the sun; if mists still prevail, it is merely a sign that the spring-time has not yet come, but come again it must and will! Farewell! and from my heart I say,—May a merciful Providence preserve you all in health and happiness!

FELIX.

Rome, November 8th, 1830.

I must now write to you of my first week in Rome; how I have arranged my time, how I look forward to the winter, and what impression the glorious objects by which I am surrounded have made on me; but this is no easy task. I feel as if I were entirely changed since I came here. Formerly when I wished to check my haste and impatience to press forward, and to continue my journey more rapidly, I attributed this eagerness merely to the force of habit, but I am now fully persuaded that it arose entirely from my anxiety to reach this goal. Now that I have at last attained it, my mood is so tran-

quil and joyous, and yet so serious, that I shall not attempt to describe it to you. What it is that thus works on me I cannot exactly define; for the awe-inspiring Coliseum, the brilliant Vatican, the genial air of spring, the kindly people, my comfortable apartments, and everything else combine in causing these feelings. At all events I am different from what I was. I am better in health and happier than I have been for a long time, and take delight in my work, for which I feel such an inclination, that I expect to accomplish much more here than I anticipated; indeed, I have already done a good deal. If it pleases Providence to grant me a continuation of this happy mood, I look forward to the most delightful and productive winter.

Picture to yourself a small house, with two windows in front, in the Piazza di Spagna, No. 5, which all day long enjoys the warm sun, and an apartment on the first floor, where there is a good Viennese grand piano: on the table are some portraits of Palestrina, Allegri, etc., along with the scores of their works, and a Latin psalm-book, from which I am to compose the *Non Nobis;*—such is my present abode. The Capitol was too far away, besides I had a great dread of the cold air, which here I have no cause to guard against; for when I look out of my window in the morning across the square, I see every object sharply defined in the sunshine against the blue sky. My landlord was formerly a captain in the French service, and his daughter has the most splendid contralto voice I know. Above

me lives a Prussian captain, with whom I talk politics,—in short, the situation is excellent.

When I come into the room early in the morning, and see the sun shining so brightly on the breakfast-table (you see I am marred as a poet), I feel so cheerful and comfortable, for it is now late in the autumn, and who in our country at this season looks for warmth, or a bright sky, or grapes and flowers? After breakfast I set to work and play, sing, and compose, till near noon. Then Rome in all her vast dimensions lies before me, like an interesting problem to enjoy; but I go deliberately to work, daily selecting some different historical object. One day I visit the ruins of the ancient city; another I go to the Borghese gallery, or to the Capitol, or St. Peter's, or the Vatican. Each day is thus made memorable, and as I take my time, each object becomes firmly and indelibly impressed on me. When I am occupied in the forenoon I am unwilling to leave off, and should like to continue my writing, but I say to myself that I must see the Vatican, and when I am actually there I equally dislike leaving it; thus each of my occupations causes me the most genuine pleasure, and one enjoyment relieves another.

Just as Venice, with her past, reminded me of a vast tombstone: her crumbling modern palaces, and the perpetual reminders of by-gone splendour, causing sad and discordant sensations; so does the past of Rome suggest the impersonation of history; her monuments elevate the soul, inspiring solemn yet serene feelings, and

it is a pleasing thought that man should be capable of producing creations, which, after the lapse of a thousand years, still renovate and animate others. When I have fairly imprinted an object like this on my mind, and each day a fresh one, twilight has usually arrived, and the day is over.

I then visit my friends and acquaintances, when we mutually communicate what each has done, which means *enjoyed* here, and are reciprocally pleased. I have been most evenings at Bendemann's and Hübner's, where German artists usually assemble, and I sometimes go to Schadow's. The Abbate Santini is a valuable acquaintance for me, as he has a very complete library of ancient Italian music, and he kindly gives or lends me anything I like, for he is complaisance itself. At night he makes either Ahlborn or me accompany him home, as an Abbate being seen alone at night in the streets would bring him into evil repute. That such youngsters as Ahlborn and I should act as duennas to a priest of sixty is diverting enough.

The Duchess of —— gave me a list of old music of which she was anxious to procure copies if possible. Santini's collection contains all this, and I am much obliged to him for having furnished me with copies, for I am now looking through them all, and becoming acquainted with them. I beg you will send me for him, as a token of my gratitude, the six cantatas of Sebastian Bach, published by Marx at Simrock's, or some of his pieces for the organ. I should however

prefer the cantatas: he already has the "Magnificat," the Motets, and many others. He has translated the "Sing to the Lord a new Song," and intends it to be executed in Naples, for which he deserves a reward. I am writing to Zelter all particulars about the Papal singers, whom I have heard three times,—in the Quirinal, in the Monte Cavallo, and once in San Carlo.

I look forward with delight to seeing Bunsen; we shall have much to discuss together, and I have likewise an idea that he has got some work for me; if I can conscientiously undertake it, I will do so gladly, and render it all the justice in my power. Among my home pleasures I include that of reading for the first time Goethe's journey to Italy; and I must avow that it is a source of great satisfaction to me to find that he arrived in Rome the very same day of the year that I did; that he also went first to the Quirinal, and heard a Requiem there; that he was seized with the same fit of impatience in Florence and Bologna; and felt the same tranquil, or as he calls it, solid spirit here: indeed, everything that he describes, I exactly experience myself, so I am pleased.

He speaks in detail of a large picture of Titian's in the Vatican, and declares that its meaning is not to be devised; only a number of figures standing beautifully grouped together. I fancy, however, that I have discovered a very deep sense in it, and I believe that whoever finds the most beauties in Titian, is sure to be most in the right, for he was a glorious man. Though he

had no such scope for the display and diffusion of his genius here, as Raphael had in the Vatican, still I can never forget his three pictures in Venice, and to these I may add the one in the Vatican, which I saw for the first time this morning. If any one could come into the world endowed with full consciousness, every object around would smile on him with the same vivid life and animation, that these pictures do on us. The School of Athens, and the Disputa, and the Peter, stand before us precisely as they were created; and then the entrance through splendid open arches, whence you can see the Piazza of St. Peter's, and Rome, and the blue Alban hills; and above our heads figures from the Old Testament, and a thousand bright little angels, and arabesques of fruit, and garlands of flowers; and then on to the gallery!

You well deserve praise, dear Hensel, for your copy of the "Transfiguration" is superb! The pleasing thrill which seizes me, on beholding for the first time some immortal work, and the pervading idea and chief impression it inspires, I did not experience on this occasion from the original, but from *your* copy. The first effect of this picture to-day was no greater than that which yours had previously made on me; and it was only after considerable research and contemplation that I succeeded in finding out anything new to me. On the other hand, the Madonna di Foligno dawned on me in the whole splendour of her loveliness. I have passed a happy morning in the midst of all these glo-

rious works; as yet I have not once visited the statues, but have reserved my first impression of them for another day.

November 9th, morning.

Thus every morning brings me fresh anticipations, and every day fulfils them. The sun is again shining on my breakfast-table, and I am now going to my daily work. I will send you, dear Fanny, by the first opportunity, what I composed in Vienna, and anything else that may be finished, and my sketch-book to Rebecca; but I am far from being pleased with it this time, so I intend to study attentively the sketches of the landscape painters here, in order to acquire if possible a new manner. I tried to invent one of my own, but in vain.

To-day I am going to the Lateran, and the ruins of ancient Rome; and in the evening to a kind English family, whose acquaintance I made here. Pray send me a good many letters of introduction. I am exceedingly anxious to know numbers of people, especially Italians. So I live on happily, and think of you in every pleasant moment. May you also be happy, and rejoice with me at the prospect which lies before me here!

FELIX M. B.

Rome, November 16th, 1830.

Dear Fanny,

No post left this the day before yesterday, and I

could not talk to you, so when I remembered that my letter must necessarily remain two days before it left Rome, I felt it impossible to write; but I thought of you times without number, and wished you every happiness, and congratulated myself that you were born a certain number of years ago. It is, indeed, cheering to think what sensible beings are to be found in the world; and you are certainly one of these. Continue cheerful, bright, and well, and make no great change in yourself. I don't think you require much improvement; may good fortune ever abide with you!

And now I think these are all my birthday good wishes; for really it is not fair to expect that a man of my *calibre* should wish you also a fresh stock of musical ideas; besides, you are very unreasonable in complaining of any deficiency in that respect. *Per Bacco!* if you had the inclination, you certainly have sufficient genius to compose, and if you have no desire to do so, why grumble so much? If I had a baby to nurse, I certainly should not write any scores, and as I have composed *Non Nobis,* I cannot unluckily carry my nephew about in my arms. But to speak seriously, your child is scarcely six months old yet, and you can think of anything but Sebastian?* (not Bach!) Be thankful that you have him. Music only retreats when there is no longer a place for her, and I am not surprised that you are not an unnatural mother. However, you have my best wishes on your birthday, for all

* The name of the child.

that your heart desires; so I may as well wish you half-a-dozen melodies into the bargain; not that this will be of much use.

In Rome here, we celebrated the 14th of November by the sky shining, in blue and festive array, and breathing on us warm genial air. So I went on pleasantly towards the Capitol and into church, where I heard a miserable sermon from ——, who is no doubt a very good man, but to my mind has a most morose style of preaching; and any one who could vex me on *such* a day, in the Capitol, and in church, must have an especial talent for so doing. I afterwards went to call on Bunsen, who had just arrived. He and his wife received me most kindly, and we conversed on much that was interesting, including politics and regrets for your absence. *Apropos,* my favourite work that I am now studying is Goethe's 'Lili's Park,' especially three portions: "Kehr' ich mich um, und brumm:" then, "Eh la menotte;" and best of all, "Die ganze Luft ist warm und blüthevoll," where decidedly clarionets must be introduced. I mean to make it the subject of a scherzo for a symphony.

Yesterday, at dinner at Bunsen's, we had among others a German musician. Oh, heavens! I wish I were a Frenchman! The man said to me, "Music must be *handled* every day." "Why?" replied I, which rather embarrassed him. He also spoke of earnest purpose; and said that Spohr had no earnest purpose, but that he had distinctly discerned gleams of an earnest

purpose in my *Tu es Petrus*. The fellow, however, has a small property at Frascati, and is about to *lay down* the profession of music; if one had only got so far!

After dinner came Catel, Eggers, Senf, Wolf, then a painter, and then two more, and others. I played the piano, and they asked for pieces by Sebastian Bach, so I played numbers of his compositions, which were much admired. I also explained clearly to them the mode in which the "Passion" is executed; for they seemed scarcely to believe it. Bunsen has a copy arranged for the piano; he showed it to the Papal singers, and they said before witnesses, that such music could not possibly be executed by human voices. I think the contrary. It seems, however, that Trautwein is about to publish the score of the Passion of St. John. I suppose I must order a set of studs for Paris, *à la Back*.

To-day Bunsen is to take me to Baini's, whom he has not seen for a year, as the latter never goes out except to hear confessions. I am glad to know him, and shall endeavour to improve my intimacy with him, for he can solve many an enigma for me. Old Santini continues as kind as ever. When we are together in society, of an evening, if I either praise or do not recognize any particular piece mentioned, next morning he is sure to knock gently at my door, and to bring me the piece in question carefully wrapped up in his blue pocket-handkerchief; I, in return, accompany him home every evening; and we are great friends. He also brought

me his Te Deum, written in eight parts, requesting me to improve it by a little modulation, as the key of G major predominates too much; so I mean to try if I cannot introduce some A minor or E minor.

I am now very anxious to become acquainted with a good many Italians. I visit at the house of a certain Maestro di San Giovanni Laterano, whose daughters are musical, but not pretty, so this does not count for much. If therefore you can send me introductions, pray do so. I work in the morning; at noon I see and admire, and thus the day glides away till sunset; but I should like in the evening to mix in the Roman world. My kind English friends have arrived from Venice; Lord Harrowby and his family are passing the winter here. Schadow, Bendemann, Bunsen, Tippelskirch, all receive every evening; in short, I have no lack of acquaintances, but I should like to know some Italians also.

The present, dear Fanny, that I have prepared for your birthday, is a psalm, for chorus and orchestra, *Non nobis, Domine.* You know the subject well; there is an air in it which has a good ending, and the last chorus will I hope please you. I hear that next week I shall have an opportunity of sending it to you, along with a quantity of new music. I intend now to finish my overture, and then (D.V.) to proceed with my symphony. A pianoforte concerto, too, that I wish to write for Paris, begins to float in my head. If Providence kindly bestows on me success and bright days, I

hope we shall enjoy them together. Farewell! May you be happy!

FELIX.

Rome, November 22nd, 1830.

My dear Brother and Sisters,

You know how much I dislike, at a distance of two hundred leagues, and fourteen days' journey from you, to offer good advice. I mean to do so, however, for once. Let me tell you therefore of a mistake in your conduct, and in truth the same that I once made myself. I do assure you that never in my life have I known my father write in so irritable a strain as since I came to Rome, so I wish to ask you if you cannot devise some domestic recipe to cheer him a little? I mean, by forbearance and concession, and especially by dwelling on the cheerful rather than the depressing side of matters; by avoiding all disagreeable topics; instead of calling things "shameful," say "unpleasant;" or instead of "superb," "passable." This method has often a wonderfully good effect; and I just throw out the suggestion, whether it may not be equally successful in this case? For, apart from the great events of the world, this irritability of my father often seems to me to proceed from the same cause that it did when I chose to pursue my own path in my musical studies. He was then constantly in a state of irritation, incessantly abusing Beethoven and all visionaries; and this

often vexed me very much, and made me sometimes very unamiable. At that very time some fresh annoyance occurred, which put my father out of sorts, and made him, I believe, not a little uneasy. So long then as I persisted in upholding and exalting my Beethoven, the evil became daily worse; and one day, if I remember rightly, I was even sent out of the room. At last however it occurred to me that I might speak a great deal of truth, and yet avoid the particular truth obnoxious to my father; so the aspect of affairs speedily began to improve, and soon all went well.

Perhaps you may have in some degree forgotten that you ought now and then to be forbearing, and not disputatious. My father considers himself both much older and more irritable than, thank God, he really is; but however much we may be in the right, it is our place to yield to him as he has often done to us. Strive, then, to praise what he likes, and do not attack what is implanted in his heart, more especially ancient established ideas. Do not commend what is new till it has made some progress in the world, and acquired a name, for till then it is a mere matter of taste. Try then to charm my father into your magic circle, and be playful and kind with him. In short, try to smooth and to equalize things; and remember that I, experienced man of the world as I am, never yet have met a family, with all its weaknesses, defects, and failings, which has been so happy as our own till now.

Do not send me any answer to this, for you will not

receive it for a month, and by that time no doubt some fresh topic will have arisen; besides, if I have spoken nonsense, I do not wish to be scolded by you; and if I have spoken properly, I hope you will follow my good advice.

November 23rd.

Just as I was going to set to work at the "Hebrides," arrived Herr B——, a musical professor from Magdeburg. He played me over a whole book of songs, and an Ave Maria, and begged to have the benefit of my opinion. I seemed in the position of a juvenile Nestor, and made him some insipid speeches, but this caused me the loss of a morning in Rome, which is a pity. The Choral, "Mitten wir im Leben sind," is finished, and is certainly one of the best sacred pieces that I have yet composed. After I have completed the Hebrides, I think of arranging Handel's Solomon for future performance, with proper curtailments, etc. I then purpose writing the Christmas Music of "Vom Himmel hoch," and the symphony in A minor; perhaps also some pieces for the piano, and a concerto, etc., just as they come into my head.

I own I do sadly miss some friend to whom I could communicate my new works, and who could examine the score along with me, and play a bass or a flute; whereas now when a piece is finished I must lay it aside in my desk without its giving pleasure to any one. London spoiled me in this respect. I can never again expect to meet all together such friends as I had there.

Here I can only say the half of what I think, and leave the best half unspoken; whereas there it was not necessary to say more than the half, because the other half was a mere matter of course, and already understood. In other respects, however, this is a most delightful place.

We young people went lately to Albano, and set off early in the most lovely weather. We drove along to Frascati, passing under the great aqueduct, its dark brown outlines standing out sharply defined against the clear blue sky; thence to the monastery at Grotta Ferrata, where there are some beautiful frescoes by Domenichino; then to Marino, very picturesquely situated on an eminence, and proceeding along the margin of the lake we reached Castel Gandolfo. The scenery, like my first impression of Italy, is by no means so striking or so wonderfully beautiful as is generally supposed, but most pleasing and gratifying to the eye, and the outlines undulating and picturesque, forming a perfect whole, with its *entourage* and distribution of light.

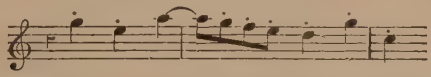
Here I must deliver a eulogy on monks; they finish a picture at once, giving it tone and colour, with their wide loose gowns, their pious meditative gait, and their dark aspect. A beautiful shady avenue of evergreen oaks runs along the lake from Castel Gandolfo to Albano, where monks of every order are swarming, animating the scenery and yet marking its solitude. Near the city a couple of mendicant monks were walking together; further on, a whole troop of young Jesuits; then we saw an elegant young priest in a thicket read-

ing; beyond this two more were standing in the wood with their guns, watching for birds. Then we came to a monastery, encircled by a number of small chapels. There at last all was solitude; but at that moment a dirty, stupid-looking Capuchin, issued forth, laden with huge nosegays, which he placed before the various shrines, kneeling down in front of each before proceeding to decorate it.

As we passed on, we met two old prelates engaged in eager conversation. The bell for vespers was ringing in the monastery of Albano, and even on the summit of the highest hill stands a Passionist convent, where they are only permitted to speak for a single hour daily, and occupy themselves solely in reading the history of the passion of Christ. In Albano, among girls with pitchers on their heads, vendors of flowers and vegetables, and all the crowd and tumult, we met a coal-black dumb monk, returning to Monte Cavo, who formed a singular contrast to the rest of the scene. They seem to have taken entire possession of all this splendid country, and form a strange melancholy ground-tone for all that is lively, gay, and free, and the enduring cheerfulness which nature gives. It is as if men, on that very account, required a counterpoise. This is not however my case, and I need no contrast to enable me to enjoy what I see.

I am often with Bunsen, and as he likes to turn the conversation on the subject of his Liturgy and its musical portions, which I consider very faulty, I am per-

fectly plain-spoken, and give him a straightforward opinion; and I believe this is the only way to establish a mutual understanding. We have had some long, serious discussions, and I hope we shall eventually know each other more intimately, Yesterday Palestrina's music was performed at Bunsen's house (as on every Monday), and then for the first time I played before the Roman musicians *in corpore.* I am quite aware that my playing has to force its way in every foreign city. This makes me usually feel rather embarrassed, and such was the case with me yesterday. After the Papal singers finished Palestrina's music, it was my turn to play something. A brilliant piece would have been unsuitable, and there had been more than enough of serious music; I therefore begged Astolfi, the Director, to give me a theme, so he lightly touched the notes with one finger thus:—



smiling as he did so. The black-frocked Abbati pressed round me and seemed highly delighted. I observed this, and it inspirited me so much that towards the end I succeeded famously; they clapped their hands like mad, and Bunsen declared that I had astounded the clergy; in short, the affair went off well. There is no encouraging prospect of any public performance here, so society is the only resource, which is fishing in troubled waters.—Yours,

FELIX.

Rome, November 30th, 1830.

To come home from Bunsen's by moonlight, with your letter in my pocket, and then to read it through leisurely at night,—this is a degree of pleasure I wish many may enjoy. In all probability I shall stay here the whole winter, and not go to Naples till April. It is so delightful to look round on every side, and to appreciate it all properly. There is much that must be thought over, in order to receive a due impression from it. I have also projected so much work requiring both quiet and industry, that I feel anything like haste would be utter destruction; and though I adhere faithfully to my system, to receive each day only one fresh image into my mind, still I am sometimes compelled even then to give myself a day of rest, that I may not become confused. I write you a short letter to-day, because I must for the present adhere to my work; and yet I cannot refrain from culling all the beauty that lies at my feet. The weather, too, is *brutto* and cold, so that I am not in a very communicative mood. The Pope is dying, or possibly dead by this time. "We shall soon get a new one," say the Italians, coolly; and as his death will not affect the Carnival, nor the church festivals, with their pomps and processions, and fine music, and as there will be in addition to these, solemn requiems, and the lying-in-state at St. Peter's, they are quite content, provided it does not occur in February.

I am delighted to hear that Mantius sings my songs, and likes them. Give him my kind regards, and ask

him why he does not perform his promise, and write to me. I have written to him repeatedly in the shape of music. In the "Ave Maria," and in the choral "Aus tiefer Noth,' some passages are composed expressly for him, and he will sing them charmingly. In the "Ave,' which is a salutation, a tenor solo takes each movement before the choir (I thought of a disciple all the time). As the piece is in A major, and goes rather high at the words *Benedicta tu*, he must prepare his high A; it is sure to sound well. Ask him to sing you a song I sent to Devrient from Venice, "Von schlechtem Lebenswandel." It is expressive of mingled joy and despair; no doubt he will sing it well. Show it to no one, but confine it solely to forty eyes.* Ritz† too never writes, and yet I am constantly longing for his violin and his depth of feeling when he plays, which all recurs to my mind when I see his welcome writing. I am now working daily at the "Hebrides," and will send it to Ritz as soon as it is finished. It is just the weird sort of thing to suit him.

Next time I write I will tell you more of myself. I work hard, and lead a pleasant, happy life; my mirror is stuck full of Italian, German, and English visiting-cards, and I spend every evening with one of my acquaintances. There is a truly Babylonian confusion of

* A play on the German idiom for a dead secret, "under four eyes."

† The violin player, Edward Ritz, an intimate friend of Mendelssohn's.

tongues in my head, for English, Italian, German, and French are all mixed up together in it. Two days ago I again extemporized before the Papal singers. The fellows had contrived to get hold of the most strange, quaint theme for me, wishing to put my powers to the test. They call me, however, *l'insuperabile professorone,* and are particularly kind and friendly. I much wished to have described to you the Sunday music in the Sistina, a *soirée* at Torlonia's, the Vatican, St. Onofrio, Guido's Aurora, and other small matters, but I reserve them for my next letter. The post is about to set off, and this letter with it. My good wishes are always with you to-day and ever.—Yours,

FELIX.

Rome, December 7th, 1830.

I cannot even to-day manage to write to you as fully as I wish. Heaven knows how time flies here! I was introduced this week to several agreeable English families, and so I have the prospect of many pleasant evenings this winter. I am much with Bunsen. I intend also to cultivate Baini. I think he conceives me to be only a *brutissimo Tedesco,* so that I have a famous opportunity of becoming well acquainted with him. His compositions are certainly of no great value, and the same may be said of the whole music here. The wish is not wanting, but the means do not exist. The orchestra is beyond conception bad. Mdlle. Carl,* (who

* Formerly a singer in the Royal Theatre at Berlin.

is engaged as *prima donna assoluta* for the season, at both the principal theatres here,) is now arrived, and begins to make *la pluie et le beau temps.* The Papal singers even are becoming old; they are almost all unmusical, and do not execute even the most established pieces in tune. The whole choir consists of thirty-two singers, but that number are rarely together. Concerts are given by the so-called Philharmonic Society, but only with the piano. There is no orchestra, and when recently they wished to perform Haydn's "Creation," the instrumentalists declared it was impossible to play it. The sounds they bring out of their wind instruments, are such as in Germany we have no conception of.

The Pope is dead, and the Conclave assembles on the 14th. A great part of the winter will be occupied with the ceremonies of his funeral, and the enthronement of the new Pope. All music therefore and large parties must be at an end, so I very much doubt whether I shall be able to undertake any public performance during my stay here; but I do not regret this, for there are so many and various intellectual enjoyments, that I lose nothing by dwelling on and endeavouring to utilize them. The performance of Graun's "Passion" in Naples, and more especially the translation of Sebastian Bach's, prove that the good cause is sure eventually to make its way, though it will neither kindle enthusiasm, nor will it be appreciated. It is no worse however with regard to music—in fact, rather better—than with their estimate of every other branch

of the fine arts; for when some of Raphael's Loggie are with inconceivable recklessness and disgraceful barbarism actually defaced, to give place to inscriptions in pencil; when the lower part of the arabesques are totally destroyed, because Italians with knives, and Heaven knows what else besides, inscribe their insignificant names there; when some one daubs in large letters under the Apollo Belvedere, 'Christ;' when an altar has been erected in front of Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment," so large that it hides the centre of the picture, thus destroying the whole effect; when cattle are driven through the splendid saloons of the Villa Madama, the walls of which are painted by Giulio Romano, and fodder is stored in them, simply from indifference towards the beautiful,—all this is certainly much worse than a bad orchestra, and painters must be even more distressed by such things than I am by their miserable music.

The fact is, that the people are mentally enervated and apathetic. They have a religion, which they do not believe; a Pope and a Government, which they ridicule; a brilliant and heroic past, which they disregard. It is thus no marvel that they do not delight in Art, for they are indifferent to all that is earnest. It is really quite revolting to see their unconcern about the death of the Pope, and their unseemly merriment during the ceremonies. I myself saw the corpse lying in state, and the priests standing round incessantly whispering and laughing aloud; and at this moment,

when masses are being said for his soul, they are in the very same church hammering away at the scaffolding of the catafalque, so that the strokes of the adze and the noise of the workpeople entirely prevent any one hearing the religious services. As soon as the Cardinals assemble in conclave, satires appear against them, wherein, for instance, they parody the Litany, and instead of praying to be delivered from each particular sin, they name the bad qualities of each well-known cardinal; or set forth an entire opera, in which all the characters are Cardinals, one being the *primo amoroso*, another the *tiranno assoluto*, a third, stage candle-snuffer, etc. This could not be the case where the people took any pleasure in Art. Formerly these things were no better, but the people believed in them; and it is this which makes the difference. Nature, however, and the genial December atmosphere, and the outlines of the Alban hills, stretching as far as the sea, all remain unchanged. There they can scribble no names, or compose no inscriptions. These every one can still individually enjoy in all their freshness, and to these I cling. I feel much the want of a *friend* here, to whom I could freely unbosom myself; who could read my music as I write it, thus making it doubly precious in my eyes; in whose society I could rest and recreate myself, and from whom I might honestly learn (it would not require a very wise man for this purpose). But just as trees are not ordained to grow up into the sky, so probably such a man is not likely to be found

here; and the good fortune in this respect which I have everywhere else so richly enjoyed, is destined to desert me here; so I must hum over my melodies to myself, and I dare say I shall do well enough.

FELIX.

Rome, December 10th, 1830.

Dear Father,

It is a year this very day since we kept your birthday at Hensel's, and now let me give you some account of Rome, as I did at that time of London. I intend to finish my Overture to the "Einsame Insel"* as a present to you, and if I write under it the 11th December when I take up the sheets, I shall feel as if I were about to place them in your hands. You would probably say that you could not read them, but still I should have offered you the best it was in my power to give; and though I desire to do this every day, still there is a peculiar feeling connected with a birthday. Would I were with you! I need not offer you my good wishes, for you know them all already, and the deep interest I, and all of us, take in your happiness and welfare, and that we cannot wish any good for you, that is not reflected doubly on ourselves. To-day is a holiday. I rejoice in thinking how cheerful you must all be at

* Afterwards published under the name of "Overture to the Hebrides."

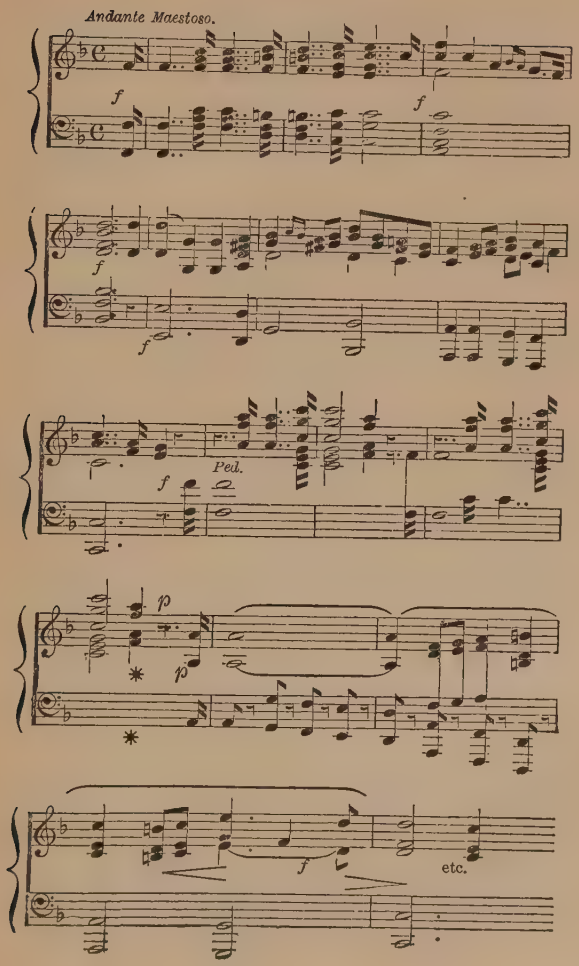
home; and in telling to you how happily I live here, I feel as if wishing you joy. A period like this, when serious thought and enjoyment are combined, is indeed most cheering and beneficial. Every time I enter my room I rejoice anew at having no journey to pursue next day, and that I may quietly postpone many things till the morrow—that I am in Rome! Much that passed through my brain on my way hither was swept away by fresh ideas, each new impression chasing away the previous one, while here, on the contrary, they are all in turn properly developed. I never remember having worked with so much zeal, and if I am to complete all that I have projected, I must be very industrious during the winter. I must indeed forego the delight of showing my finished compositions to one who could take pleasure in them, and enter into them along with me; but this very want impels me to return to my labours, which please me most when I am fairly in the midst of them. And now this must be combined with the various solemnities, and festivals of every kind, which now and then supplant my work for a day or two; and as I have resolved to see and to enjoy all I possibly can, I do not allow my occupation to prevent this, and then return with fresh zeal to my composition.

This is indeed a delightful existence! My health is as good as possible, though the hot wind, called here the *sirocco*, rather attacks my nerves, and I find I must beware of playing the piano much, at night; it will be

easy for me to refrain from doing so for a few days, as for some weeks past I have been playing almost every evening. Bunsen, who often warns me against playing if I find it prejudicial, gave a large party yesterday, where nevertheless I was obliged to play; but it was a pleasure to me, for I had the opportunity of making so many agreeable acquaintances. Thorwaldsen, in particular, expressed himself in so gratifying a manner with regard to me, that I felt quite proud, for I honour him as one of the greatest of men, and always have revered him. He looks like a lion, and the very sight of his face is invigorating. You feel at once that he must be a noble artist; his eyes look so clear, as if with him every object must assume a definite form and image. Moreover he is very gentle, and kind, and mild, because his nature is so superior; and yet he seems to be able to enjoy every trifle. It is a real source of pleasure to see a great man, and to know that the creator of works that will endure for ever stands before you in person; a living being with all his attributes, and individuality, and genius, and yet a man like others.

December 11th, morning.

Now your actual birthday is arrived! A few lines of music suggested themselves to me on the occasion, and though they may not be worth much, the congratulations I have been in the habit of offering, were of quite as little value. Fanny may add the second part. I have only written what occurred to my mind as I entered the room, the sun shining, on your birthday:—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etc.

Bunsen has just been here, and begs me to send you his best regards and congratulations. He is all kindness and courtesy towards me, and as you wish to know, I think I may say that we suit each other remarkably well. The few words you wrote about P—— recalled him to my memory in all his offensiveness. The Abbate Santini ought to be an obscure man compared with him, for he never attempts to magnify his own importance by impertinence or self-sufficiency. P—— is one of those collectors who make learning and libraries distasteful to others by their narrow-mindedness, whereas Santini is a genuine collector, in the best sense of the word. No matter how costly the pieces in his collection may be, he freely communicates them all, and is only anxious to procure additions in pursuance of his main purpose, which is to promote the diffusion and universal knowledge of ancient music. I have not seen him lately, as every morning now he has to figure *ex officio*, in his violet gown at St. Peter's; but if he has made use of some ancient text, he will say so without scruple, as he has no wish to be thought the first discoverer. He is, in fact, a man of limited capacity; and this I consider great praise in a certain sense, for though he is neither a musical nor any other luminary, and even bears some resemblance to Lessing s inquisitive friar, still he knows how to confine himself within his own sphere. Music itself does not interest him much, if he can only have it on his shelves; and he is, and esteems himself to be, simply a quiet, zealous collector. I must

admit that he is rather a bore, and not altogether free from irritability; still I like a man who adopts and perseveres in some particular pursuit, prosecuting it to the best of his ability, and endeavouring to perfect it for the benefit of mankind, and I think others should esteem him too, whether he chance to be tiresome or agreeable.

I wish you would read this aloud to P——. It always makes me furious when men who have no pursuit, presume to criticize those who wish to effect something, even on a small scale; so on this very account I took the liberty of rebuking lately a certain musician in society here. He began to speak of Mozart, and as Bunsen and his sister love Palestrina, he tried to flatter their tastes by asking me, for instance, what I thought of the worthy Mozart, and all his sins. I however replied, that so far as I was concerned, I should feel only too happy to renounce all *my* virtues in exchange for Mozart's sins: but that of course I could not venture to pronounce on the extent of *his* virtues. The people all laughed, and were highly amused. How strange it is that such persons should feel no awe of so great a name!

It is some consolation, however, that it is the same in every sphere of art, as the painters here are quite as bad. They are a formidable race to look at, as they sit in their *Café Greco*. I scarcely ever go there, for I dread both themselves and their favourite place of resort. It is a small dark room, about eight yards square, where you may smoke on one side, but not on the other;

round this they sit on benches, with sombrero hats on their heads, and huge mastiffs beside them; their cheeks and throats, and the whole of their faces covered with hair, puffing fearful clouds of smoke (only on one side of the room), and saying rude things to each other, while the mastiffs provide for a due distribution of vermin. A neckcloth or a coat would be here quite innovations; spectacles hide any portion of the face left visible by the beard; and so they drink their coffee, and talk of Titian and Pordenone, just as if they were sitting beside them, and wore beards and sou'westers like their own! Moreover, they paint such sickly Madonnas, such feeble saints, and such milksop heroes, that I feel the strongest inclination to knock them down. These infernal critics do not even shrink from abusing Titian s picture in the Vatican, about which you asked me; they say that it has neither subject nor meaning; yet it never seems to occur to them, that a master who had so long studied a picture with due love and reverence, must have had quite as deep an insight into the subject as they are likely to have, even through their coloured spectacles. And if in the course of my life I accomplish nothing but this, I am at all events determined to say the most harsh and cutting things to those who show no reverence towards their masters, and then I shall at least have performed one good work. But there they stand, and see all the splendour of those creations, so far transcending their own conceptions, and yet dare to criticize them.

In this picture there are three stages, or whatever they are called, the same as in the "Transfiguration." Below, saints and martyrs are represented in suffering and abasement; on every face is depicted despondency, nay, almost impatience; one figure in rich episcopal robes looks upwards, with the most eager and agonized longing, as if weeping, but he cannot see all that is floating above his head, but which *we* see, standing in front of the picture. Above, Mary and her child are seated on a cloud, radiant with joy, and surrounded by angels, who have woven many garlands; the Holy Child holds one of these, and seems as if about to crown the saints beneath, but his Mother withholds his hand for the moment. The contrast between the pain and suffering below, whence St. Sebastian looks forth out of the picture with such gloom and almost apathy, and the lofty unalloyed exultation in the clouds above, where crowns and palms are already awaiting him, is truly admirable. High above the group of Mary hovers the Holy Spirit, from whom emanates a bright streaming light, thus forming the keystone of the whole composition. I have just remembered that Goethe, at the beginning of his first visit to Rome, describes and admires this picture; but I no longer have the book to enable me to read it over, and to compare my description with his. He speaks of it in considerable detail. It was then in the Quirinal, and has since been transferred to the Vatican; whether it was a commissioned picture, as some allege, or not, is of no moment. Titian has im-

bued it with his genius and his poetical feeling, and has thus made it his own. I like Schadow much, and am often with him; on every occasion, and especially in his own department, he is mild and clear-judging, doing justice with due modesty to all that is truly great; he recently said that Titian had never painted an indifferent or an uninteresting picture, and I believe he is right; for life and enthusiasm and the soundest vigour are displayed in all his productions, and where these qualities exist, the result must be good. There is one singular and fortunate peculiarity here, though all the objects have been, a thousand times over, described, discussed, copied, and criticized in praise or blame, by the greatest masters, and the most insignificant scholars, cleverly or stupidly; still they never fail to make a fresh and sublime impression on all, affecting each person according to his own idiosyncrasy. Here we can take refuge from man in all that surrounds us; in Berlin it is often exactly the reverse.

I have this moment received your letter of the 27th, and am heartily glad to find that I have already answered many of the questions it contains. There is no hurry about the introductions I asked for, as I have now made almost more acquaintances than I wish; for late hours, and playing so much, do not suit me in Rome, so I can await the arrival of these letters very patiently: it was not so at the time I urged you to send them. I cannot however understand what you mean by your allusion to *coteries* which I ought to have out-

grown, for I know that I, and all of us, invariably have dreaded and detested what is usually so called,—that is, a frivolous, exclusive circle of society, clinging to empty outward forms. Among persons, however, who daily meet, while their mutual objects of interest remain the same, who have no sympathy with public life (and this is certainly the case in Berlin, with the exception of the theatre), it is not unnatural that they should form for themselves a gay, cheerful, and peculiar mode of treating passing events, and that this should give rise to a special, and perhaps monotonous style of conversation; but this by no means constitutes a *coterie*. I feel convinced that I shall never belong to one, whether I am in Rome or Wittenberg. I am glad that the last words I had written when your letter arrived, chanced to be that in Berlin you must take refuge in society from all that surrounds you; thus proving that I had no spirit of *coterie*, which invariably estranges men from each other. I should regret your observing anything of the kind in me or in any of us, except indeed for the moment. Forgive me, my dear Father, for defending myself so warmly, but this word is most repugnant to my feelings, and in your letter you urge me always to speak out what I think in a straightforward manner, so pray do not take this amiss.

I was in St. Peter's to-day, where the grand solemnities called the absolutions have begun for the Pope, and which last till Tuesday, when the cardinals assemble in conclave. The building surpasses all powers of descrip

tion. It appears to me like some great work of nature, a forest, a mass of rocks, or something similar; for I never can realize the idea that it is the work of man. You strive to distinguish the ceiling as little as the canopy of heaven. You may lose your way in St. Peter's, you may take a walk in it, and ramble till you are quite tired; divine service is performed and chanted there without your being aware of it till you come quite close. The angels in the Baptistery are monstrous giants; the doves, colossal birds of prey; you lose all idea of measurement with the eye, or proportion; and yet who does not feel his heart expand, when standing under the dome, and gazing up at it? At present a monstrous catafalque has been erected in the nave in this shape.* The coffin is placed in the centre under the pillars; the thing is totally devoid of taste, and yet it has a wondrous effect. The upper circle is thickly studded with lights, so are all the ornaments; the lower circle is lighted in the same way, and over the coffin hangs a burning lamp, and innumerable lights are blazing under the statues. The whole structure is more than a hundred feet high, and stands exactly opposite the entrance. The guards of honour, and the Swiss, march about in the quadrangle; in every corner sits a Cardinal in deep mourning, attended by his servants, who hold large burning torches, and then the singing commences with chants, in the simple and monotonous tone you no doubt remember. It is the only occasion

* A little sketch of the catafalque was enclosed in the letter.

when there is any singing in the middle of the church, and the effect is wonderful. Those who place themselves among the singers (as I am permitted to do) and watch them, are forcibly impressed by the scene: for there they all stand round a colossal book from which they sing, and this book is in turn lit up by a colossal torch that burns before it; the choristers eagerly press forward in their vestments, in order to see and to sing properly: and Baini with his monk's face, beats time with his hand, and occasionally joins in the chant with a stentorian voice. To watch all these different Italian faces, is "most interesting; one enjoyment quickly succeeding another" here, and it is the same in their churches, especially in St. Peter's, where by moving a few steps the whole scene is changed. I went to the very furthest end, whence there was indeed a wonderful *coup d'œil.* Through the spiral columns of the high altar, which is confessedly as high as the palace in Berlin, far beyond the space of the cupola, the whole mass of the catafalque was seen in diminished perspective, with its rows of lights, and numbers of small human beings crowding round it. When the music commences the sounds do not reach the other end for a long time, but echo and float in the vast space, so that the most strange vague harmonies reach the ear. If you change your position, and place yourself right in front of the catafalque, beyond the blaze of light and the brilliant pageantry, you have the dusky cupola replete with blue vapour; all this is quite indescribable. Such is Rome!

This has become a long letter, so I must conclude; it will reach you on Christmas-day. May you all enjoy it happily! I send each of you presents, which are to be dispatched two days hence, and will arrive in time for the anniversary of your silver wedding-day. Many glad festivals are thus crowded together, and I scarcely know whether to imagine myself with you to-day, and to wish you, dear father, all possible happiness, or to fancy myself arriving with my letter at Christmas, and my mother not letting me pass through the room where the Christmas-tree is being got ready. I am afraid I must be contented with thinking of you.—Farewell all! May you be happy!

FELIX.

I have just received your letter, which brings me the intelligence of Goethe's illness. What I personally feel at this news I cannot express. This whole evening his words, "I must try to keep all right till your return," have sounded continually in my ears, to the exclusion of every other thought: when he is gone, Germany will assume a very different aspect for artists. I have never thought of Germany without feeling heartfelt joy and pride that Goethe lived there; and the rising generation seem for the most part so weakly and feeble, that it makes my heart sink within me. He is the last; and with him closes a happy prosperous period for us! This year ends in solemn sadness.

Rome, December 30th, 1830.

In my former letter I told you of the more serious aspect of Roman life; but as I wish to describe to you how I live, I must now tell you of the gaieties that have prevailed during this week.

To-day we have the most genial sunshine, a blue sky, and a transparent atmosphere, and on such days I have my own mode of passing my time. I work hard till eleven o'clock, and from that hour till dark, I do nothing but inhale the air. For the first time, for some days past, we yesterday had bright weather. After therefore working for a time in the morning at "Solomon," I went to the Monte Pincio, where I rambled about the whole day. The effect of this exhilarating air is quite magical; and when I arose to-day, and again saw bright sunshine, I exulted in the thoughts of the entire idleness I was again about to indulge in. The whole world is on foot, revelling in a December spring. Every moment you meet some acquaintance, with whom you lounge about for a time, then leave him, and once more enjoy your solitary reverie. There are swarms of handsome faces to be seen. As the sun declines, the appearance of the whole landscape, and every hue, undergo a change. When the Ave Maria sounds, it is time to go to the church of Trinità de' Monti, where the French nuns sing; and it is charming to hear them. I declare to heaven that I am becoming quite tolerant, and listen to bad music with edification; but what can I do? the composition is positively ridiculous; the organ-

playing even more absurd. But it is twilight, and the whole of the gaudy little church is filled with persons kneeling, lit up by the sinking sun each time that the door is opened; both the singing nuns have the sweetest voices in the world, quite tender and touching, more especially when one of them sings the chants in her melodious voice, which we are accustomed to hear chanted by priests in a loud, harsh, monotonous tone. The impression is very singular; moreover, it is well known that no one is permitted to see the fair singers, —I have therefore formed a strange resolution. I am composing something to suit their voices, which I observed very minutely, and I mean to send it to them, —which I have various means of doing. That they will sing it, I feel quite assured; and it will be pleasant for me to hear my chant performed by persons whom I never saw, especially as they must in turn sing it to the *barbaro Tedesco,* whom they also never beheld. I am charmed with this idea. The text is in Latin,—a Prayer to Mary. Does not this notion please you?*

After church I walk again on the hill till it is quite dark, when Madame Vernet and her daughter, and pretty Madame V—— (for whose acquaintance I have to thank Roesel), are much admired by us Germans, and we form groups round them, or follow, or walk beside them. The background is formed by haggard painters with terrific beards; they smoke tobacco on

* This piece appeared afterwards as Opus 39.

the Monte Pincio, whistle to their huge dogs, and enjoy the sunset in their own way.

As I am in a frivolous mood to-day, I must relate to you, dear sisters, every particular of a ball I lately attended, and where I danced with a degree of zeal I never did before. I had given a hint to the master of the ceremonies (who stands in the middle here, and regulates everything), consequently he allowed the *galop* to continue for more than half an hour, so I was in my element, and pleasantly conscious that I was dancing in the Palazzo Albani, in Rome, and also with the prettiest girl in it, according to the verdict of competent judges (Thorwaldsen, Vernet, etc.). The way in which I became acquainted with her is also an anecdote of Rome. I was at Torlonia's first ball, though not dancing, as I knew none of the ladies present, but was merely looking at the people. Suddenly some one tapped me on the shoulder, saying, "So you also are admiring the English beauty; I am quite dazzled." It was Thorwaldsen himself, standing at the door, lost in admiration; scarcely had he said this, when we heard a torrent of words behind us,—"Mais où est-elle donc, cette petite Anglaise? Ma femme m'a envoyé pour la regarder. Per Bacco!" It was quite clear that this little thin Frenchman, with stiff, grey hair, and the ribbon of the Legion of Honour, must be Horace Vernet. He now discussed the youthful beauty with Thorwaldsen, in the most earnest and scientific manner; and it was quite a pleasure to me to see these two old masters

admiring the young girl together, while she was dancing away, quite unconcerned. They were then presented to her parents, but I had to fall back, and could not join in the conversation. A few days afterwards, however, I was with some acquaintances whom I knew through the Attwoods, at Venice, having been invited for the purpose of being introduced to some of their friends; and these friends turned out to be the very persons I have been speaking of; so your son and brother was highly delighted.

My pianoforte playing procures me a singular gratification here. You know how Thorwaldsen loves music, and I sometimes play to him in the morning while he is at work. He has an excellent instrument in his studio, and when I look at the old gentleman and see him kneading his brown clay, and delicately fining off an arm, or a fold of drapery,—in short, when he is creating what we must all admire when completed, as an enduring work,—then I do indeed rejoice that I have the means of bestowing any enjoyment on him. Nevertheless, I have not fallen into arrear with my own tasks. The "Hebrides" is completed at last, and a strange production it is. The chant for the nuns is in my head; and I think of composing Luther's choral for Christmas, but on this occasion I must do so quite alone; and it will be a more serious affair this time, and so will the anniversary of your silver wedding-day, when I intend to have a great many lights, and to sing my "Liederspiel," and to have a peep at my English

bâton. After the new year, I intend to resume instrumental music, and to write several things for the piano, and perhaps one or other of two new symphonies which have been haunting my brain.

I have lately visited a most delightful spot,—the tomb of Cecilia Metella. The Sabine hills had a sprinkling of snow, but it was glorious sunshine; the Alban hills were like a dream or a vision. There is no such thing as distance in Italy, for all the houses on the hills can be counted, with their roofs and windows. I have thus enjoyed the air to satiety; and to-morrow in all probability, more serious occupations will be resumed, for the sky is overcast, and it is raining hard, but what a spring this will be!

December 21st.

This is the shortest day, and very gloomy, as might have been anticipated; so to-day nothing can be thought of but fugues, chorals, balls, etc. But I must say a few words about Guido's "Aurora," which I often visit; it is a picture, the very type of haste and impetus; for surely no man ever imagined such hurry and tumult, such sounding and clashing. Painters maintain that it is lighted from two sides,—they have my full permission to light *theirs* from three if it will improve them,—but the difference lies elsewhere.

I really cannot compose a tolerable song here, for who is there to sing it to me? But I am writing a grand fugue, "Wir glauben all," and sing it to myself in such a fashion that my friend the Captain rushes

downstairs in alarm, puts in his head, and asks what I want? I answer—a counter theme. But how much I do really want; and yet how much I have got! Thus life passes onwards.

FELIX.

Rome, December 28th, 1830.

Rome in wet weather is the most odious, uncomfortable place imaginable. For some days past we have had incessant storms and cold, and streams of water from the sky; and I can scarcely realize that, only one week ago, I could have written you a letter full of rambles and orange-trees and all that is beautiful: in such weather as this everything becomes ugly. Still, I must write to you about it, otherwise my previous letter would not have the advantage of contrast, and of that there is no lack. If in Germany we can form no conception of the bright winter days here, quite as little can we realize a really wet winter day in Rome; everything is arranged for fine weather, so the bad is borne like a public calamity, and in the hope of better times. There is no shelter anywhere; in my room, which is usually so comfortable, the water pours in through the windows, which will not shut fast; the wind whistles through the doors, which will not close; the stone floor chills you in spite of double mattings, and the smoke from the chimney is driven into the room,

because the fire will not burn; foreigners shiver and freeze here like tailors.

All this is, however, actual luxury when compared with the streets; and when I am obliged to go out, I consider it a positive misfortune. Rome, as every one knows, is built on seven large hills; but there are a number of smaller ones besides, and all the streets are sloping, so the water pours down them, and rushes towards you; nowhere is there a raised footpath, or a *trottoir;* at the stair of the Piazza di Spagna, there is a flood like the great water-works in Wilhelms-Höhe; the Tiber has overflowed its banks, and inundated the adjacent streets; this, then, is the water from below. From above come violent showers of rain, but that is the least part. The houses have no water-spouts, and the long roofs slant precipitously, but, being of different lengths, they dash down the water furiously on both sides of the streets, so that go where you will, close to the houses, or in the middle of the road, past a barber's shop or a palace, you are sure to be drenched, and, quite unawares, you find yourself standing under a tremendous shower-bath, the water pelting on your umbrella, while a stream is running before you that you cannot jump over, so you are obliged to return the way you came: this is the water overhead. Then the carriages drive as rapidly as possible, and close to the houses, so that you must retreat into the doorways till they are past; they not only splash men and houses, but each other, and when two meet in a narrow way, one

must drive into the gutter, so that, being a rapid current, the consequences are lamentable. Lately I saw an Abbate hurrying along, whose umbrella chancing to knock off the broad-brimmed hat of a peasant, it fell with the crown exposed to one of these deluges, and when the man went to pick it up, it was quite filled with water. "Scusi," said the Abbate. "Padrone," replied the peasant. The hackney coaches moreover only ply till five o'clock, so if you go to a party at night, it costs you a scudo. *Fiat justitia et pereat mundus*—Rome in rainy weather is vastly disagreeable.

I see by a letter of Devrient's, that one I wrote to him from Venice, and which I took to the post myself on the 17th of October, had not reached him on the 19th of November. It would appear also, that another which I sent the same day to Munich had not arrived; both these letters contained music, and this accounts for their loss. At that very time in Venice they carried off all my manuscripts to the Custom-house, after visiting my effects at night, shortly before the departure of the post, and I only received them again here, after much worry and writing backwards and forwards. Every one assured me that the cause of this was a secret correspondence being suspected in cipher in the manuscript music. I could scarcely credit such pitiful absurdity; but as my two letters from Venice containing music have not arrived, and these only, the thing is clear enough. I intend to complain of this to the Austrian ambassador here, but it will do no good, and

the letters are evidently lost, which I much regret.—Farewell!

FELIX.

Rome, January 17th, 1831.

For a week past we have had the mildest, loveliest spring weather. Young girls are carrying about nosegays of violets and anemones, which they gather early in the morning at the Villa Pamfili. The streets and squares swarm with gaily attired pedestrians; the Ave Maria has already been advanced twenty minutes, but what is become of the winter? Some little time ago it indeed reminded me of my work, to which I now mean to apply steadily, for I own that during the gay social life of the previous weeks, I had rather neglected it. I have nearly completed the arrangement of "Solomon," and also my Christmas anthem, which consists of five numbers; the two symphonies also begin to assume a more definite form, and I particularly wish to finish them here. This I hope to do during Lent, when parties cease (especially balls) and spring begins, and then I shall have both time and inclination to compose, in which case I shall have a good store of new matter. Any performance of them here is quite out of the question. The orchestras are worse than any one could believe; both musicians, and a right feeling for music, are wanting. The two or three violin performers attack in different styles, and join in when they

please; the wind instruments are tuned either too high or too low; and they execute flourishes in the subordinate parts like those we are accustomed to hear in the streets, but hardly so good; in short, the whol forms an absolute caterwauling, and this applies even to compositions with which they are familiar.

The question is, whether all this could be radically reformed by introducing other people into the orchestra, by teaching the musicians time, and by instructing them in first principles. I think in that case the people would no doubt take pleasure in it; so long, however, as this is not done, no improvement can be hoped for, and every one seems so indifferent on the subject, that there is not the slightest prospect of such a thing. I heard a solo on the flute, where the flute was more than a quarter of a tone too high; it set my teeth on edge, but no one remarked it, and when at the end a shake came, they applauded mechanically. If it were even a shade better with regard to singing! But the great singers have left the country. Lablache, David, Lalande, Pisaroni, etc., sing in Paris, and the pigmies who remain, copy their finest points, which they turn into intolerable caricature.

What we in Germany endeavour to accomplish may be something false or impossible, but it is, and always will be, something different from this; and just as a *cicisbeo* will for ever be odious and repulsive to my feelings, so also will Italian music. I may be too dull to comprehend either; but I cannot help it; and re-

cently, at the Philharmonic, after all the music of Pacini and Bellini, when the Cavaliere Ricci begged me to accompany him in "Non più andrai, the very first notes were so utterly different and so infinitely remote from all that had gone before, that the matter was clear to me then, and will never be otherwise, so long as there is such a blue sky, and such a charming winter as the present. In the same way the Swiss can paint no beautiful scenery, precisely because they have it the whole day before their eyes. "Les Allemands traitent la musique comme une affaire d'état," says Spontini, and I accept the omen. I lately heard some musicians here talking of their composers, and I listened in silence. One quoted ——, but the others interrupted him, saying he could not be considered an Italian, for the German manner still clung to him, and he had never been able to get rid of it; consequently his music had never made its way in Italy: we Germans say precisely the reverse of him, and it must be not a little trying to find yourself so *entre deux*, and to be thus left without a fatherland. So far as I am concerned I stick to my own colours, which are quite honourable enough for me.

Last night a theatre that Torlonia has undertaken and organized, was opened with a new opera of Pacini's. The crowd was great, and every box filled with handsome, well-dressed people; young Torlonia appeared in a stage-box with his mother, the old Duchess, and they were immensely applauded. The audience called

out *Bravo, Torlonia, grazie, grazie!* Opposite to him was Jerome, with his suite, and covered with orders: in the next box Countess Samoilow, etc. Over the orchestra is a picture of Time pointing to the dial of the clock, which revolves slowly, and is enough to make any one melancholy. Pacini then appeared at the piano, and was kindly welcomed. He had prepared no overture, so the opera began with a chorus, accompanied by strokes on an anvil tuned in the proper key. The Corsair came forward, sang his *aria*, and was applauded, on which the Corsair above, and the Maestro below, bowed (this pirate is a contralto, and sung by Mademoiselle Mariani); a number of airs followed, and the piece became very tiresome. This seemed to be also the opinion of the public, for when Pacini's grand *finale* began, the whole pit stood up, talking aloud to each other, laughing and turning their backs on the stage. Madame Samoilow fainted in her box, and was carried out. Pacini glided away from the piano, and at the end of the act, the curtain fell in the midst of a great tumult. Then came the grand ballet of *Barbe Bleue*, followed by the last act of the opera. As the audience were now in a mood for it, they hissed the whole ballet from the very beginning, and accompanied the second act also with hisses and laughter. At the close Torlonia was called for, but he would not appear.

This is the matter-of-fact narrative of a first performance at the opening of a theatre in Rome. I had

anticipated much amusement, so I came away considerably out of humour; still, if the music had made *furore,* I should have been vexed, for it is so wretched as to be really beneath all criticism. But that they should suddenly turn their backs on their favourite Pacini, whom they wished to crown in the Capitol, should parody and caricature his melodies, this does, I confess, provoke me not a little, and is likewise a proof of how low such a musician stands in the public opinion. Another time they will carry him home on their shoulders; but this is no compensation. They would not act thus in France with regard to Boieldieu; independent of all love of art, a sense of propriety would prevent their doing so: but enough of this subject, for it is too vexatious.

Why should Italy still insist on being the Land of Art, while it is in reality the Land of Nature, thus delighting every heart! I have already described to you my walks to the Monte Pincio. I continue them daily. I went lately with the Vollards to Ponte Nomentano, a solitary dilapidated bridge in the spacious green Campagna. Many ruins from the days of ancient Rome, and many watch-towers from the Middle Ages, are scattered over this long succession of meadows; chains of hills rise towards the horizon, now partially covered with glittering snow, and fantastically varied in form and colour by the cloud shadows. And there is also the enchanting, vapoury vision of the Alban hills, which change their hues like a chameleon, as you gaze

at them,—where you can see for miles little white chapels glittering on the dark ground of the hills, as far as the Passionist Convent on the summit, and whence you can trace the road winding through thickets, and the hills sloping downwards to the Lake of Albano, while a hermitage peeps through the trees. The distance is equal to that from Berlin to Potsdam, say I as a good Berliner; but that it is a lovely vision, I say in earnest. No lack of music *there;* it echoes and vibrates *there* on every side; not in the vapid, tasteless theatres. So we rambled about, chasing each other in the Campagna, and scrambling over the fences, and after sunset we drove home, feeling thoroughly weary, and yet as self-satisfied and pleased, as if we had done great things; and so we have, if we *rightly appreciated* it all.

I have applied myself again vigorously to drawing, and begin to work in sepia, as I should be glad to be able to recall some pictorial effects, and practice quickens the perceptions. I must now tell you, dear mother, of a great, very great pleasure I recently enjoyed, because you will rejoice with me. Two days ago I was for the first time in a small circle with Horace Vernet, and played there. He had previously told me that his most favourite and esteemed music was "Don Juan," especially the Duet and the Commendatore at the end; and as I highly approved of such sentiments on his part, the result was, that while intending to play a prelude to Weber's *Concert-stück,* I imperceptibly glided further into extemporizing,—thought I would please him by

taking these themes, and so I worked them up fancifully for some time. This caused him a degree of delight such as I have seldom known my music produce in any one, and we felt at once more intimate. Afterwards he suddenly came up to me, and whispered that we must make an exchange, for that he also was an *improvisatore;* and when I was naturally curious to know what he meant, he said it was his secret. He is however like a little child, and could not conceal it for more than a quarter of an hour, when he came in again, and taking me into the next room, he asked me if I had any time to spare, as he had stretched and prepared a canvas, and proposed painting my portrait on it, which I was to keep in memory of this day, or roll it up and send it to you, or take it with me, just as I chose. He said he should have no easy task with his improvisation, but at all events he would attempt it. I was only too glad to give my consent, and cannot tell you how much I was enchanted with the delight and enthusiasm he evidently felt in my playing.

It was in every respect a happy evening; as I ascended the hill all was still and peaceful, and only one window lighted up in the large dark villa.* Fragments of music floated on the air, and its echoes in the dark night, mingled with the murmuring of fountains, were sweeter than I can describe. Two schoolboys were drilling in the anteroom, while a third acted the part of lieutenant, and commanded in good style. In another room my

* Vernet lived in the Villa Medici.

friend Montfort, who gained the prize for music in the Conservatorium, was seated at a piano, and others were standing round, singing a chorus; but it went very badly. They urged another young man to join them, and when he said that he did not know how to sing, his friend rejoined, "Qu'est-ce que ça fait? c'est toujours une voix de plus!" I helped them as I best could, and we were well amused. Afterwards we danced, and I wish you could have seen Louisa Vernet dancing the Saltarella with her father. When at length she was forced to stop for a few moments, and snatched up a tambourine, playing with the utmost spirit, and relieving us, who could really scarcely any longer move our hands, I wished I had been a painter, for what a superb picture she would have made! Her mother is the kindest creature in the world, and the grandfather, Carl Vernet (who paints such splendid horses), danced a quadrille the same evening with so much ease, making so many *entrechats,* and varying his steps so gracefully, that it is a sad pity he should actually be seventy-two years of age. Every day he rides, and tires out two horses, paints and draws a little, and spends the evening in society.

In my next letter I must tell you of my acquaintance with Robert, who has just finished an admirable picture, "The Harvest," and also describe my recent visits with Bunsen to the studios of Cornelius, Koch, Overbeck, etc. My time is fully occupied, for there is plenty to do and to see; unluckily I cannot make time elastic, no matter how I tug at it. I have as yet said nothing

of Raphael's portrait as a child, and Titian's "Nymphs Bathing," who, in a piquant enough fashion, are designated "Sacred and Profane Love," one being in full gala costume, while the other is devoid of all drapery,* or of my exquisite "Madonna di Foligno," or of Francesco Francia, the most guileless and devout painter in the world; or of poor Guido Reni, whom the bearded painters of the present day treat with such contempt, and yet he painted a certain Aurora, and many other splendid objects besides; but what avails description? It is well for me that I can revel in the sight of them. When we meet, I may perhaps be able to give you a better idea of them.—Your

FELIX.

Rome, February 1st, 1831.

I intended not to write to you till my birthday, but possibly two days hence I may not be in a writing mood, and must drive all fancies away by hard work. It does not seem probable that the Papal military band will surprise me in the morning,† and as I have told all my acquaintances that I was born on the 25th, I think the day will glide quietly by; I prefer this to a trivial half-and-half celebration. I will picture you all as present with me in the morning, and feel happy in my fancy,

* This picture is in the Borghese Gallery.

† On the 3rd of February, 1830, the bands of some regiments in Berlin gave Mendelssohn a serenade in honour of his birthday.

and in thinking of you. I shall then play over my military overture, and select my favourite dish for dinner, from the *carte* at the *Lepre*. It is not unprofitable to be obliged to do all this for one's self, both on birthdays and other days. I feel isolated enough, and am rather partial to the other extreme. On my birthday the Torlonias are so obliging as to give a ball to eight hundred persons; on Wednesday, the day before, and on Friday, the day after my birthday, I am invited to the houses of English friends. Last week I was busily engaged in sight-seeing, and revisited many well-known objects;—such as the Vatican, the Farnesina, Corsini, the Villa Lante, Borghese, etc. Two days ago I saw the frescoes for the first time in Bartholdy's house;* inasmuch as the English ladies who reside there, and who have transformed the painted saloon into a sleeping apartment, with a four-post bed, would never hitherto permit me to enter it. So this was my first visit to my uncle's house, where at last I saw his pictures, and the view of the city. It was a noble, regal idea to have these frescoes; and the execution of such a sublime thought, in spite of every kind of impediment and annoyance, simply in order that the design should be carried out, seems to me very charming.

But to turn to an entirely different subject. In many circles here, it is the fashion to consider piety and dulness synonymous, and yet they are very different; our

* The Prussian Consul-General Bartholdy, who died in Rome, and was an uncle of Felix Mendelssohn's.

German clergyman here is not behindhand in this respect. There are men in Rome with an amount of fanaticism credible in the sixteenth century, but quite monstrous in the present day; they all wish to convert one another, abusing each other in a Christian manner, and each ridiculing the belief of his neighbour, till it is quite too sad to hear them. As if simplicity and narrow-mindedness were the same thing! Unfortunately I must here retract my favourite axiom, that *goodwill* can effect all things, *ability* must accompany it; but I am soaring too high, and my father will lecture me. Do not expect much from this letter, for we have snow on the ground; the roofs in the Piazza di Spagna are quite white, and heavy clouds of snow are gathering; nothing can be more odious to us Southerners, and we are freezing. The Monte Pincio is a mass of ice. Your Northern Lights are taking their revenge on us. Who can write or think with any degree of warmth? I was so pleased at the idea of being a whole winter without snow, but now I must give up that notion. The Italians say that spring breezes will come in a few days; then gay life, and gay letters, will be resumed. Farewell! may you enjoy every good, and think of me.

FELIX.

Rome, February 8th, 1831.

The Pope is elected: the Pope is crowned. He performed mass in St. Peter's on Sunday, and conferred

his benediction; in the evening the dome was illuminated, succeeded by the Girandola; the Carnival began on Saturday, and pursues its headlong course in the most motley forms. The city has been illuminated each evening. Last night there was a ball at the French Embassy; to-day the Spanish Ambassador gives a grand entertainment. Next-door to me they sell *confetti*, and how they do shout! And now I might as well stop, for why attempt to describe, what is, in fact, indescribable? You ought to make Hensel tell you of these splendid *fêtes*, which in pomp, brilliancy, and animation, surpass all the imagination can conceive, for my sober pen is not equal to the task. What a different aspect everything has assumed during the last eight days, for now the mildest and most genial sun is shining, and we remain in the balcony enjoying the air till sunset. Oh, that I could enclose for you, in this letter, only one quarter of an hour of all this pleasure, or tell you how life actually flies in Rome, every minute bringing its own memorable delights! It is not difficult to give *fêtes* here; if the simple architectural outlines are lighted up, the dome of St. Peter's blazes forth in the dark purple atmosphere, calmly shining. If there are fireworks, they brighten the gloomy solid walls of the Castle of St. Angelo, and fall into the Tiber; when they commence their fantastic *fêtes* in February, the most lustrous sun shines down on them and beautifies them. It is a wondrous land.

But I must not forget to tell you that I spent my

birthday very differently from what I expected. I must however be brief, for an hour hence I go to join the Carnival in the Corso. My birthday had three celebrations—the eve, the birthday itself, and the day after. On the 2nd of February, Santini was sitting in my room in the morning, and in answer to my impatient questions about the Conclave, he replied, with a diplomatic air, that there was little chance of a Pope being elected. Mr. Brisbane also called, and told me that after leaving Berlin, he had been in Constantinople, and Smyrna, etc., and inquired after all his acquaintances in Berlin, when suddenly the report of a cannon was heard, and then another, and the people rushed across the Piazza di Spagna, shouting with all their might. We three started off, Heaven knows how, and ran breathlessly to the Quirinal, where the man was just retreating, who had shouted through a broken window,—"Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum; habemus Papam R. E. dominum Capellari, qui nomen assumsit Gregorius XVI." All the Cardinals now crowded into the balcony, to breathe fresh air, and laughed, and talked together. As it was the first time they had been in the open air for fifty days, no wonder they looked pleased, their red caps shining brightly in the sun; the whole Piazza was filled with people, who clambered on the obelisk, and on the horses of Phidias, but the statues towered far above them in the air. Carriage after carriage drove up, amid jostling and shouting. Then the new Pope appeared, and before him was borne the golden cross,

and he blessed the crowd for the first time, while the people at the same moment prayed, and cried "Hurrah!" All the bells in Rome were ringing, and there was firing of cannons, and flourishes of trumpets, and military music. This was the *eve* of my birthday.

Next morning I followed the crowd down the long street to the Piazza of St. Peter's, which looked finer than I had ever seen it, lit up brightly by the sun, and swarming with carriages; the Cardinals in their red coaches, driving in state to the sacristy, with servants in embroidered liveries, and people innumerable, of every nation, rank, and condition; and high above them the dome and the church seeming to float in blue vapour, for there was considerable mist in the morning air. And I thought that Capellari would probably appropriate all this to himself when he saw it; but I knew better. It was all to celebrate my birthday; and the election of the Pope, and the homage, was a spectacle got up in my honour; but it was well and naturally performed, and so long as I live, I shall never forget it.

St. Peter's was crowded to the door. The Pope was borne in on his throne, and fans of peacocks' feathers carried before him, and then set down on the High Altar, when the Papal singers intoned "*Tu es sacerdos magnus.*" I only heard two or three chords, but it required no more; the sound was enough. Then one Cardinal succeeded another, kissing the Pope's foot and his hands, when he in turn embraced them. After surveying all this for a time, standing closely pressed by a

crowd, and unable to move, to look suddenly aloft to the dome, as far as the lantern, inspires a singular sensation. I was with Diodati, among a throng of Capuchins; these saintly men are far from being devotional on an occasion of this kind, and by no means cleanly. But I must hasten on; the Carnival is beginning, and I must not lose any portion of it.

At night, (in honour of my birthday,) tar barrels were burned in all the streets, and the Propaganda illuminated. The people thought this was owing to its being the former residence of the Pope, but *I* knew it was because I lived exactly opposite, and I had only to lean out of my window to enjoy it all. Then came Torlonia's ball, and in every corner were seen glimpses of red caps above, and red stockings below. The following day they worked very hard at scaffoldings, platforms, and stages for the Carnival: notices were posted up about the horse-races, and specimens of masks were displayed at the windows, and (in celebration of the day following my birthday) the illumination of the dome, and the Girandola, were fixed for Sunday. On Saturday all the world went to the Capitol, to witness the form of the Jews' supplications to be suffered to remain in the Sacred City for another year; a request which is refused at the foot of the hill, but, after repeated entreaties, granted on the summit, and the Ghetto is assigned to them. It was a tiresome affair; we waited two hours, and after all, understood the oration of the Jews as little as the answer of the

Christians. I came down again in very bad humour, and thought that the Carnival had commenced rather unpropitiously. So I arrived in the Corso and was driving along, thinking of nothing particular, when I was suddenly assailed by a shower of sugar comfits. I looked up; they had been flung by some young ladies whom I had seen occasionally at balls, but scarcely knew, and when in my embarrassment I took off my hat to bow to them, the pelting began in right earnest. Their carriage drove on, and in the next was Miss T——, a delicate young Englishwoman. I tried to bow to her, but she pelted me too, so I became quite desperate, and clutching the *confetti,* I flung them back bravely; there were swarms of my acquaintances, and my blue coat was soon as white as that of a miller. The B——s were standing on a balcony, haling *confetti* by handfuls at my head; and thus pelting and pelted, amid a thousand jests and jeers, and the most extravagant masks, the day ended with races.

The following day there was no carnival, but as a compensation, the Pope conferred his benediction from the Loggia, in the Piazza of St. Peter's; he was consecrated as Bishop in the Church, and at night the dome was lighted up. The sudden, nay *instantaneous* change the illumination of the building effects, you must ask Hensel to paint or to describe, whichever he prefers. To me the sudden and surprising vision, of so many hundred human beings, previously invisible, now revealed as it were in the air, working and moving

about, was perfectly stupendous; and the glorious Girandola,—but who can conceive it! Now the gaieties recommence. Farewell! in my next letter I mean to continue my description. Yesterday, at the Carnival, flowers and *bonbons* were indiscriminately thrown, and a mask gave me a bouquet, which I have dried, and mean to bring home for you. All idea of work is out of the question at present; I have only composed one little song; but when Lent comes, I intend to be more industrious. Who can think just now either of writing or music? I must go out, so farewell, dear ones.

FELIX.

Rome, February 22nd, 1831.

A thousand thanks for your letter of the 8th, which I received yesterday, on my return from Tivoli. I cannot tell you, dear Fanny, how much I am delighted with your plan about the Sunday music. This idea of yours is most brilliant, and I do entreat of you, for Heaven's sake, not to let it die away again; on the contrary, pray give your travelling brother a commission to write something new for you. He will gladly do so, for he is quite charmed with you, and with your project. You must let me know what voices you have, and also take counsel with your subjects as to what they like best (for the people, O Fanny, have rights).

I think it would be a good plan sometimes to place before them something easy, interesting, and pleasing, (as, for instance, the Litany of Sebastian Bach),—but to speak seriously, I recommend the "Shepherd of Israel," or the "Dixit Dominus," of Handel.

Had you not better now and then play something to them during the intervals? I think this would not be unprofitable to either party, for they must have time to take breath, and you must study the piano, and thus it would become a vocal and instrumental concert. I only wish that I could be one of the audience, and compliment you afterwards. Be discreet and indulgent, and avoid fatiguing either yourself or the voices of your singers. Do not be vexed when things go badly; say very little on the subject to any one. Do not "beware of entrance to a quarrel (*Händel*); but being in, bear it that the oppressor may beware of thee." Lastly, above all, endeavour to prevent the choir from feeling bored, for this is the principal point. Ever your affectionate Polonius! One of my pieces probably owes its birth to this Sunday music plan. When you wrote to me about it lately, I reflected whether there was anything I could send you, thus reviving an old favourite scheme of mine, which has however now assumed such vast proportions, that I cannot let you have any part of it by E——, but you shall have it at some future time.

Listen, and wonder! Since I left Vienna I have partly composed Goethe's first "Walpurgis Night," but have not yet had courage to write it down. The

composition has now assumed a form, and become a grand Cantata, with full orchestra, and may turn out well. At the opening there are songs of spring, etc., and plenty of others of the same kind. Afterwards, when the watchmen with their "Gabeln und Zacken und Eulen," are making a great noise, comes the witches' apparition, for which, as you know, I have a particular weakness; the sacrificial Druids then appear, represented by trombones in C major, then the watchmen come in again in alarm, and here I mean to introduce a weird, fluttering sort of chorus; and lastly to conclude with a grand sacrificial hymn. Do you not think that this might develop into a new style of Cantata? I have an instrumental introduction, as a matter of course, and the effect of the whole is very spirited. I hope it will soon be finished. I have once more begun to compose with fresh vigour, and the Italian symphony makes rapid progress; it will be the most sportive piece I have yet composed, especially the last movement. I have not yet decided on the *adagio*, and think I shall reserve it for Naples. "Verleih uns Frieden" is completed, and. "Wir glauben all" will also be ready in a few days. The Scotch symphony alone is not yet quite to my liking; if any brilliant idea occurs to me, I will seize it at once, quickly write it down, and finish it at last.

FELIX.

Rome, March 1st, 1831.

While I write this date, I shrink from the thought of how time flies. Before this month is at an end the Holy Week begins, and when it is over, my stay in Rome will be drawing to a close. I now try to reflect whether I have made the best use of my time, and on every side I perceive a deficiency. If I could only compass one of my two symphonies! I must and will reserve the Italian one till I have seen Naples, which must play a part in it, but the other also seems to elude my grasp, the more I try to seize it; and the nearer the end of this delightful quiet Roman period approaches, the more am I perplexed, and the less do I seem to succeed. I feel as if it will be long indeed before I can write again as freely as here, and so I am eager to finish what I have to do, but I make no progress. The 'Walpurgis Night' alone gets on quickly, and I hope it will soon be accomplished. Besides, I cannot resist every day sketching, that I may carry away with me reminiscences of my favourite haunts. There is still much that I wish to see, so I perfectly well know that this month too will suddenly come to an end, and much remain undone; and indeed it is quite too beautiful here.

Rome is considerably changed, and neither so gay nor so cheerful as formerly.* Almost all my acquaintances are gone; the promenades and streets are de-

* Some disturbances had in the meantime broken out in the Ecclesiastical States, at Bologna.

serted, the galleries closed, and it is impossible to gain admittance into them. All news from without almost entirely fails us (for we saw the details about Bologna first in the 'Allgemeine Zeitung' yesterday); people seldom or never congregate together; in fact, everything has subsided into entire rest; but then the weather is lovely, and no one can deprive us of this warm, balmy atmosphere. Those who are most to be pitied in the present state of affairs are the Vernet ladies, who are unpleasantly situated here. The hatred of the entire Roman populace is, strangely enough, directed against the French Pensionaries, believing that their influence alone could easily effect a revolution. Threatening anonymous letters have been repeatedly sent to Vernet; indeed, he one day found an armed Transteverin stationed in front of the windows of his studio, who however took to flight when Vernet fetched his gun: and as the ladies are now entirely alone and isolated in the villa, the family is naturally very uneasy. Still all continues quiet and serene within the city, and I am quite convinced it will remain so.

The German painters are really more contemptible than I can tell you. Not only have they cut off their whiskers and moustaches, and their long hair and beards, openly declaring that as soon as all danger is at an end they will let them grow again, but these tall stalwart fellows go home as soon as it is dark, lock themselves in, and croak in solitude. They call Horace Vernet a braggart, and indeed he is very different from these

pitiful fellows, whose conduct at this time makes them intolerable to me. Of late, I have occasionally visited some of the modern studios. Thorwaldsen has just finished a statue in clay of Lord Byron. He is seated amidst ancient ruins, his feet resting on the capital of a column, while he is gazing into the distance, evidently about to write something on the tablets he holds in his hand. He is represented not in Roman costume, but in simple modern dress, and I think it looks well, and by no means out of keeping. The statue has the natural animation so remarkable in all this sculptor's works, and yet the poet looks sufficiently gloomy and elegiac, though not affected. I must some day write you a whole letter about the 'Triumph of Alexander,' for never did any piece of sculpture make such an impression on me; I go there every week, and stand gazing at that alone, and enter Babylon along with the Conqueror. I lately called on A——; he has brought with him some admirable pencil sketches from Naples and Sicily, so I should be glad to take some hints from him, but I fear that he is a considerable exaggerator, and does not sketch faithfully. His landscape of the Colosseum, at H. B's, is a beautiful romance; for I cannot say that in the original I ever perceived woods of large cypresses and orange-trees, or fountains or thickets in the centre, extending to the ruins. Moreover, *his* moustaches have also disappeared.

I have something amusing to tell you in conclusion. I wish, O my Fanny, that as a contrast to your Sunday

harmony you had heard the music we perpetrated last Sunday evening. We wished to sing the Psalms of Marcello, being Lent, and the best dilettanti consequently assembled. A Papal singer was in the middle, a *maestro* at the piano, and we sang. When a soprano solo came, all the ladies pressed forward, each insisting on singing it, so it was executed as a *tutti*. The tenor by my side never alighted on the right note, and rambled about in the most insecure regions. When I chimed in as second tenor, he dropped into my part, and when I tried to assist him, he seemed to think that was my original part, and kept steadily to his own. The Papal singer at first tried to help the soprano with falsetto, and presently took the first bass; soon after he quaked out the *alt*, and, when all was of no avail, painfully smiled across at me, and we nodded aside to each other. The *maestro*, in striving to set us all right, repeatedly lost his own place, being a bar behind, or one in advance, and thus we sang with the most complete anarchy, just as we thought fit. Suddenly came a very solemn passage for the basses alone, which they all attacked valiantly, but at the second bar broke into a chorus of loud laughter, in which we unanimously joined, so the affair ended in high good-humour. The people who had come as audience talked at the pitch of their voices, and then went out and dispersed. Eynard came in, listened to our music for a time, then made a grimace, and was seen no more. Farewell! health and happiness attend you all! FELIX.

Rome, March 15th, 1831.

The letters of introduction that R—— sent me, have been of no use to me here. L—— likewise, to whom I was presented by Bunsen, has not taken the smallest notice of me, and tries to look the other way when we meet. I rather suspect the man is an aristocrat. Albani admitted me, so I had the honour of conversing for half an hour with a Cardinal. After reading the introductory letter, he asked me if I was a pensioner of the King of Hanover. "No," said I. He supposed that I must have seen St. Peter's? "Yes," said I. As I knew Meyerbeer, he assured me that he could not endure his music; it was too scientific for him; indeed, everything he wrote was so learned, and so devoid of melody, that you at once saw that he was a German, and the Germans, *mon ami*, have not the most remote conception of what melody is! "No," said I. "In *my* scores, continued he, all sing; not only the voices sing, but also the first violin sings, and the second violin also, and the oboe sing, and so it goes on, even to the horns, and last of all the double-bass sings too." I was naturally desirous, in all humility, to see some of his music; he was modest, however, and would show me nothing, but he said that wishing to make my stay in Rome as agreeable as possible, he hoped I would pay a visit to his villa, and I might take as many of my friends with me as I chose. It was near such and such a place. I thanked him very much, and subsequently boasted considerably of this gracious permission; but presently

discovered that this villa is open to the public, and any one can go there who chooses. Since that time I have heard no more of him, and as this and some other instances have inspired me with respect, mingled with aversion, towards the highest Roman circles, I resolved not to deliver the letter to Gabrielli, and was satisfied by having the whole Bonaparte family pointed out to me on the promenade, where I met them daily.

I think Mizkiewicz very tiresome. He possesses that kind of indifference which bores both himself and others, though the ladies persist in designating it melancholy and lassitude: but this makes it no better in my eyes. If he looks at St. Peter's, he deplores the times of the hierarchy; if the sky is blue and beautiful, he wishes it were dull and gloomy; if it is gloomy, he is freezing; if he sees the Colosseum, he wishes he had lived at that period. I wonder what sort of a figure he would have made in the days of Titus!

You inquire about Horace Vernet, and this is, indeed, a pleasant theme. I believe I may say that I have learned something from him, and that every one may do the same. He produces with incredible facility and freshness. When a form meets his eye which touches his feelings, he instantly adopts it, and while others are deliberating whether it can be called beautiful, and praising or censuring, he has long completed his work, entirely deranging our æsthetical standard. Though this facility cannot be acquired, still its principle is admirable, and the cheerfulness which springs from it.

and the creative energy it evokes, nothing else can replace.

Among the alleys of evergreen trees, where at this season of blossoms the fragrance is so charming, in the midst of the shrubberies and gardens of the Villa Medicis, stands a small house, in which as you approach you invariably hear some sort of noise,—shouting, wrangling, trumpet-playing, or dogs barking; this is Vernet's *atelier.* The most picturesque disorder everywhere prevails; guns, a hunting horn, a monkey, palettes, a couple of dead hares or rabbits; the walls covered with pictures, finished and unfinished. 'The Investiture of the National Cockade' (an eccentric picture which does not please me), portraits recently begun of Thorwaldsen, Eynard, Latour-Maubourg, some horses, a sketch of a Judith, and studies for it; the portrait of the Pope, a couple of Moorish heads, bagpipers, Papal soldiers, my unworthy self, Cain and Abel, and last of all a drawing of the interior of the place itself, all hang up in his studio.

Lately his hands were quite full, owing to the number of portraits bespoken from him; but in the street he saw one of the Campagna peasants, who just now are armed and mounted by Government, and ride about Rome. The singular costume caught the artist's eye, and next day he began a picture representing a similar peasant, sitting on his horse in bad weather in the Campagna, and seizing his gun in order to take aim at some one with it; in the distance are visible a small troop of

soldiers, and the desolate plain. The minute details of the weapon, where the peasant peeps through the soldier's uniform, the wretched horse and its shabby trappings, the discomfort prevalent throughout, and the Italian phlegm in the bearded fellow, make a charming little picture; and no one can help envying him, who sees the real delight with which his brush traverses the stretched canvas, at one moment putting in a little rivulet, then a couple of soldiers, then a button on the saddle; then a green lining to the fellow's great coat. Numbers of people came to look on: during my first sitting twenty persons, at least, arrived one after the other. Countess E—— asked him to allow her to be present when he was at work; but when he darted on it as a hungry man does on food, her amazement was great. The whole family are, as I told you, good people, and when old Carl talks about his father Joseph, you must feel respect for them, and I maintain that they are noble indeed. Good-bye, for it is late, and I must send my letter to the Post.

FELIX.

Rome, March 29th, 1831.

In the midst of the Holy Week. To-morrow for the first time I am to hear the Miserere, and while you last Sunday performed 'The Passion,' the Cardinals and all the priesthood here were receiving twisted palms and olive-branches. The Stabat Mater of Palestrina was

sung, and there was a grand procession. My work has got on badly during the last few days. Spring is in all her bloom; a genial blue sky without, such as we at most only dream of at home, and a journey to Naples in my every thought; so the quiet essential to composition is not to be found. C——, who is usually unimpressionable, has written me such a glowing letter from Naples! The most prosaic men become poetical when they speak of it. The finest season of the year in Italy, is from the 15th of April to the 15th of May. Who can wonder that I find it impossible to return to my misty Scotch mood? I have therefore laid aside the Scotch symphony for the present, but hope to write down the 'Walpurgis Night' here. I shall manage to do so if I work hard to-day and to-morrow, and if we have bad weather, for really a fine day is too great a temptation. As soon as an impediment occurs, I hope to find some resource in the open air, so I go out and think of anything and everything but my composition, and do nothing but lounge about, and when the church bells begin to ring, it is the Ave Maria already. All I want now is a short overture. If I can accomplish this, the thing is complete, and I can write it out in a couple of days. Then I shall leave all my music and music-paper here, and go off to Naples, where, please God, I mean to do nothing.

Two French friends of mine have tempted me to *flâner* with them a good deal of late. When they are together, it is either a perpetual tragedy, or comedy,—

as you will. Y—— distorts everything, without a spark of talent, always groping in the dark, but esteeming himself the creator of a new world; writing moreover the most frightful things, and yet dreaming and thinking of nothing but Beethoven, Schiller, and Goethe; a victim at the same time to the most boundless vanity, and looking down condescendingly on Mozart and Haydn, so that all his enthusiasm seems to me very doubtful. Z—— has been toiling for three months at a little rondo on a Portuguese theme; he arranges neatly and brilliantly, and according to rule, and he now intends to set about composing six waltzes, and is in a state of perfect ecstasy if I will only play him over a number of Vienna waltzes. He has a high esteem for Beethoven, but also for Rossini and for Bellini, and no doubt for Auber,—in short, for everybody. And there am I between them, who would be only too glad to murder Y——, till he chances to eulogize Gluck, when I can quite agree with him. I like nevertheless to walk about with these two, for they are the only musicians here, and are both very pleasant, amiable persons; but all this forms a most comical contrast.

You say, dear mother, that Y—— must have a fixed artistic aim; but this is far from being my opinion. I believe his aim is to be married, and he is in fact worse than the other, as being more affected. Once for all, I really detest such merely external enthusiasm, as well as the gloomy despondency he assumes in the presence of ladies, and his originality in italics; were he not a

Frenchman, (and it is always pleasant to associate with them, as they have invariably something interesting to say,) it would be beyond endurance. A week hence, I shall probably write you my last letter from Rome, and then you shall hear of me from Naples. It is still quite uncertain whether I go to Sicily or not; I almost think not, as I should certainly only go by steamboat, and it is not yet settled that one is to go.

In haste, yours,

FELIX.

Rome, April 4th, 1831.

The Holy Week is over, and my passport to Naples prepared. My room begins to look empty, and my winter in Rome is now among my reminiscences of the past. I intend to leave this in a few days, and my next letter (D.V.) shall be from Naples. Interesting and amusing as the winter in Rome has been, it has closed with a truly memorable week; for what I have seen and heard far surpassed my expectations, and, as being the conclusion, I will endeavour in this, my last letter from Rome, to give you a full description of it all. People have often both zealously praised and censured the ceremonies of the Holy Week, and have yet omitted, as is often the case, the chief point, namely, its perfection as a complete whole. And it is simply for this reason that I attempt to describe it. Any other sort of description would probably remind my father of Mdlle.

de R——, who in truth only did as most art-writers do, when, in a hoarse and prosaic voice, she attempted at dinner to give us some idea of the fine clear Papal choir. Many others have given the mere music, and been dissatisfied, because external adjuncts are required to produce the full effect. Those persons may be in the right; still, so long as these indispensable externals are there, and especially in such entire perfection, so long will it impress others; and just as I feel convinced that place, time, order, the vast crowd of human beings awaiting in the most profound silence the moment for the music to begin, all contribute largely to the effect, so do I condemn the idea of deliberately separating what ought in fact to be indivisible, in order to hold up a certain portion to depreciation. That man must indeed be unhappy on whom the devotion and reverence of a vast assemblage do not produce a corresponding impression of devotion and reverence, even though they were worshipping the Golden Calf; let him alone destroy this who can replace it by something better.

It matters not whether one person repeats it from another, whether it arise from its established reputation, or whether it be merely the effect of imagination. It suffices that we have a perfect totality, which has exercised the most powerful influence for centuries past, and still exercises it, and therefore I reverence it, as I do every species of real perfection. I leave it to theologians to pronounce on its religious influence, for mere conjectures on that point are of no great value. There

is more to be considered than the mere ceremonies: for me it is sufficient, as I already said, that in any sphere the object should be fully carried out, so far as ability will permit, with fidelity and conscientiousness, to call forth my respect and appreciation. Thus you must not expect from me a formal critique on the singing, as to whether they intoned correctly or incorrectly, in tune or out of tune, or whether the compositions are fine. I would rather strive to show you how the whole thing cannot fail to make a solemn impression, and how each detail contributes to this result, and as last week I enjoyed music, forms, and ceremonies, without severing them, revelling in the perfect whole, so I do not intend to separate them in this letter. The technical part, to which I naturally paid particular attention, I mean to detail more minutely to Zelter.

The first ceremony was on Palm Sunday, when the concourse of people was so great, that I could not make my way through the crowd to my usual place on what is called the Prelate's Bench, but was forced to remain among the Guard of Honour, where indeed I had a very good view of the solemnities, but could not follow the singing properly, as they pronounced the words very indistinctly, and on that day I had no book. The result was that on this first day, the various antiphons, Gospels, and Psalms, and the mode of intoning, which is employed here in its primitive form, made the most confused and singular impression on me. I had no clear conception what rule they followed with regard

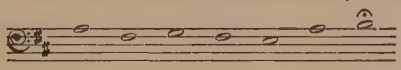
to the singular cadences. This rule I took considerable pains gradually to discover, and succeeded so well, that at the end of the Holy Week I could have sung with them. I thus also escaped the extreme weariness, so universally complained of during the endless Psalms before the Miserere; for I quickly detected any variation in the monotone, and instantly wrote down any cadence I distinctly heard; so I made out by degrees (which indeed I deserved) the melodies of eight Psalms. I also noted down the antiphons, etc., and was thus incessantly occupied and interested.

The first Sunday, however, as I already told you, I could not make it all out satisfactorily, I only knew that the choir sang "Hosanna in excelsis," and intoned various hymns, while twisted palms were offered to the Pope, which he distributed among the Cardinals. These palms are long branches decorated with buttons, crosses, and crowns, all entirely made of dried palm-leaves, which makes them look like gold. The Cardinals, who are seated in the Chapel in the form of a quadrangle, with the abbati at their feet, now advance each in turn to receive their palms, with which they return to their places; then come the bishops, monks, abbati, and all the other orders of the priesthood; the Papal singers, the knights, and others, who receive olive-branches entwined with palm-leaves. This makes a long procession, during which the choir continues to sing unremittingly. The abbati hold the long palms of their Cardinals like the lances of sentinels, slanting them

on the ground before them, and at this moment there is a brilliancy of colour in the chapel that I never before saw at any ceremony. There were the Cardinals in their gold embroidered robes and red caps, and the violet abbati in front of them, with golden palms in their hands, and further in advance, the gaudy servants of the Pope, the Greek priests, the patriarchs in the most gorgeous attire; the Capuchins with long white beards, and all the other religious Orders; then again the Swiss, in their popinjay uniforms, all carrying green olive-branches, while singing is going on the whole time; though certainly it is scarcely possible to distinguish what is being sung, yet the mere sound is sufficient to delight the ear.

The Pope's throne is then carried in, on which he is elevated in all processions, and on which I saw Pius VIII. enthroned on the day of my arrival (*vide* the 'Heliodorus' of Raphael, where it is portrayed). The Cardinals, two and two, with their palms, head the procession, and the folding doors of the chapel being thrown open, it slowly defiles through them. The singing, which has hitherto incessantly prevailed, like an element, becomes fainter and fainter (for the singers also join in the procession), and at length is only indistinctly heard, the sound dying away in the distance. Then a choir in the chapel bursts forth with a query, which the distant one answers; and so it goes on for a time, till the procession again draws near, and the choirs reunite. Let them sing how or what they please, this

cannot fail to produce a fine effect; and though it is quite true that nothing can be more monotonous, and even devoid of form, than the hymns *all' unisono*, being without any proper connection, and sung *fortissimo* throughout, still I appeal to the impression that as a *whole* it must make on every one. After the procession returns, the Gospel is chanted in the most singular tone, and is succeeded by the Mass. I must not omit here to make mention of my favourite point; I mean the Credo. The priest takes his place for the first time in the centre, before the altar, and after a short pause, intones in his hoarse old voice the Credo of Sebastian Bach. When he has finished, the priests stand up, the Cardinals leave their seats, and advance into the middle of the chapel, where they form a circle, all repeating the continuation in a loud voice, "Patrem omnipotentem," etc. The choir then chimes in, singing the same words. When I for the first time heard my well-known

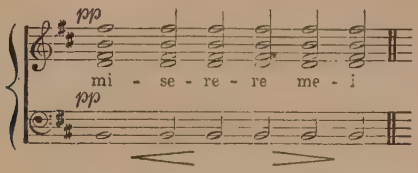


and all the grave monks round me began to recite in loud and eager tones, I was positively startled: this is the point I still like the best of all. After the ceremony, Santini made me a present of his olive-branch, which I carried in my hand the whole day when I was walking about, for the weather was beautiful. The Stabat Mater, which succeeds the Credo, made much less effect; they sang it incorrectly and out of tune, and

likewise curtailed it considerably. The Sing Akademie executes it infinitely better. There is nothing on Monday or Tuesday; but on Wednesday, at half-past four, the nocturns begin.

The Psalms are sung in alternate verses by two choirs; the one consisting entirely of basses, the other of tenors. For an hour and a half, therefore, nothing but the most monotonous music is heard; the Psalms are only once interrupted by the Lamentations, and this is the first moment when, after a long time, a complete chord is given. This chord is very softly intoned, and the whole piece sung *pianissimo*, while the Psalms are shouted out as much as possible, always upon one note, and the words uttered with the utmost rapidity, a cadence occurring at the end of each verse, which defines the different characteristics of the various melodies. It is not therefore surprising that the mere soft sound (in G major) of the first Lamentation, should produce so touching an effect. Once more the single tone recommences; a wax light is extinguished at the end of each Psalm, so that in the course of an hour and a half the fifteen lights round the altar are all out; six large-sized candles still burn in the vestibule. The whole strength of the choir, with alti and soprani, etc., intone *fortissimo* and *unisono*, a new melody, the "Canticum Zachariæ," in D minor, singing it slowly and solemnly in the deepening gloom; the last remaining lights are then extinguished. The Pope leaves his throne, and falls on his knees before the altar, while all

around do the same, repeating a paternoster *sub silentio;* that is, a pause ensues, during which you know that each Catholic present says the Lord's Prayer, and immediately afterwards the Miserere begins *pianissimo* thus:



This is to me the most sublime moment of the whole. You can easily picture to yourself what follows, but not this commencement. The continuation, which is the Miserere of Allegri, is a simple sequence of chords, on which either tradition, or what appears to me much more probable, some skilful *maestro* has based embellishments for exceptionally good voices, and more especially for a very high soprano. These *embellimenti* always recur on the same chords, and as they are carefully composed, and beautifully adapted for the voice, it is invariably pleasing to hear them repeated. I could not discover anything incomprehensible or supernatural in the music; indeed, I am perfectly contented that its beauty should be earthly and comprehensible. I refer you, dearest Fanny, to my letter to Zelter. On the first day they sang Baini's Miserere.

On Thursday, at nine o'clock in the morning, the solemnities recommenced, and lasted till one o'clock. There was High Mass, and afterwards a procession.

The Pope conferred his benediction from the Loggia of the Quirinal, and washed the feet of thirteen priests, who are supposed to represent the pilgrims, and were seated in a row, wearing white gowns and white caps, and who afterwards dine. The crowd of English ladies was extraordinary, and the whole affair repugnant to my feelings. The Psalms began again in the afternoon, and lasted on this occasion till half past seven. Some portions of the Miserere were taken from Baini, but the greater part were Allegri's. It was almost dark in the chapel when the Miserere commenced. I clambered up a tall ladder standing there by chance, and so I had the whole chapel crowded with people, and the kneeling Pope and his Cardinals, and the music beneath me. It had a splendid effect. On Friday forenoon the chapel was stripped of every decoration, and the Pope and Cardinals wore mourning. The history of the Passion, according to St. John, the music by Vittoria, was sung; then the Improperia of Palestrina, during which the Pope and all the others, taking off their shoes, advance to the cross and adore it. In the evening Baini's Miserere was given, which they sang infinitely the best.

Early on Saturday, in the baptistery of the Lateran, Heathens, Jews, and Mahomedans were baptized, all represented by a little child, who screeched the whole time, and subsequently some young priests received consecration for the first time. On Sunday the Pope himself performed High Mass in the Quirinal, and su-

sequently pronounced his benediction on the people, and then all was over. It is now Saturday, the 9th of April, and to-morrow at an early hour I get into a carriage and set off for Naples, where a new style of beauty awaits me. You will perceive by the end of this letter that I write in haste. This is my last day, and a great deal yet to be done. I do not therefore finish my letter to Zelter, but will send it from Naples. I wish my description to be correct, and my approaching journey distracts my attention sadly. And now for Naples! The weather is clearing up, and the sun shining, which it has not done for some days past. My passport is prepared, the carriage ordered, and I am looking forward to the months of spring. Adieu!

FELIX.

Naples, April 13th, 1831.

Dear Rebecca,

This must stand in lieu of a birthday letter: may it wear a holiday aspect for you! It arrives late in the day, but with equally sincere good wishes. Your birthday itself I passed in a singular but delightful manner, though I could not write, having neither table nor ink; in fact, I was in the depths of the Pontine Marshes. May the ensuing year bring you every happiness, and may we meet somewhere! If you were thinking of me on that day, our thoughts must have met either on the Brenner or at Inspruck; for I was

constantly thinking of you. Even without looking at the date of this letter, you will at once perceive by its tone that I am at Naples. I have not yet been able to compass one serious quiet reflection, there is everywhere such jovial life here, inviting you to do nothing, and to think of nothing, and even the example of so many thousand people has an irresistible influence. I do not indeed intend that this should continue, but I see plainly that it must go on for the first few days. I stand for hours on my balcony, gazing at Vesuvius and the Bay.

But I must now endeavour to resume my old descriptive style, or my materials will accumulate so much that I shall become confused, and I fear you may not be able to follow me properly. So much that is novel crowds on me, that a journal would be requisite to detail to you my life and my state of excitement. So I begin by acknowledging that I deeply regretted leaving Rome. My life there was so quiet, and yet so full of interest, having made many kind and friendly acquaintances, with whom I had become domesticated, that the last days of my stay, with all their discomforts and perpetual running about, seemed doubly odious. The last evening I went to Vernet's to thank him for my portrait, which is now finished, and to take leave of him. We had some music, talked politics, and played chess, and then I went down the Monte Pincio to my own house, packed up my things, and the next morning drove off with my travelling companions. As

I gazed out of the cabriolet at the scenery, I could dream to my heart's desire. When we arrived at our night quarters, we all went out walking. The two days were more like a pleasure excursion than a journey.

The road from Rome to Naples is indeed the most luxuriant that I know, and the whole mode of travelling most agreeable. You fly through the plain; for a very slight gratuity the postilions gallop their horses like mad, which is well-spent money in the Marshes. If you wish to contemplate the scenery, you have only to abstain from offering any gratuity, and you are soon driven slowly enough. The road from Albano, by Ariccia and Genzano, as far as Velletri, runs between hills, and is shaded by trees of every kind; uphill and downhill through avenues of elms, past monasteries and shrines. On one side is the Campagna, with its heather, and its bright hues; beyond comes the sea, glittering charmingly in the sunshine, and above, the clearest sky; for since Sunday morning the weather has been glorious.

Well! we drove into Velletri, our night quarters, where a great Church festival was going on. Handsome women with primitive faces were pacing the alleys in groups, and men were standing together wrapped in cloaks, in the street. The church was decorated with garlands of green leaves, and as we drove past it we heard the sounds of a double bass and some violins; fireworks were prepared in the square; the sun

was setting clear and serene, and the Pontine Marshes, with their thousand colours, and the rocks rearing their heads one by one against the horizon, indicated the course we were to pursue on the following day. After supper I resolved to go out again for a short time, and discovered a kind of illumination; the streets were swarming with people, and when I at last came to the spot where the church stood, I saw, on turning the corner, that the whole street had burning torches on each side, and in the middle the people were walking up and down, crowding together, and pleased to see each other so distinctly at night. I cannot tell you what a pretty sight it was. The concourse was greatest before the church; I pressed forward into it along with the rest. The little building was filled with people kneeling, adoring the Host, which was elevated; no one spoke a word, nor was there any music. This stillness, the lighted church, and the many kneeling women with white handkerchiefs on their heads, and white gowns, had a striking effect. When I left the church a shrewd, handsome Italian boy, explained the whole festival, assuring me that it would have been far finer had it not been for the recent disturbances, for they had been the cause of depriving the people of the horse-races, tar-barrels, etc., and on this account it was unlucky that the Austrians had not come sooner.

The following morning, at six o'clock, we pursued our way through the Pontine Marshes. It is a species of Bergstrasse. You drive through a straight avenue of

trees along a plain. On one side of the avenue is a continued chain of hills, on the other the Marshes. They are, however, covered with innumerable flowers, which smell very sweet; but in the long-run this becomes very stupefying, and I distinctly felt the oppression of the atmosphere, in spite of the fine weather. A canal runs along beside the *chaussée*, constructed by the orders of Pius VI. to form a conduit for the marshes, where we saw a number of buffaloes wallowing, their heads emerging out of the water, and evidently enjoying themselves. The straight, level road has a singular appearance. You see the chain of hills at the end of the avenue when you come to the first station, and again at the second and third, the only difference being that as you advance so many miles nearer, the hills loom gradually larger. Terracina, which is situated exactly at the end of this avenue, is invisible till you come quite close to it. On making a sudden turn to the left, round the corner of a rock, the whole expanse of the sea lies before you. Citron-gardens, and palms, and a variety of plants of Southern growth, clothe the declivity in front of the town; steeples appear through the thickets, and the harbour projects into the sea. To me, the finest object in nature is, and always will be, the ocean. I love it almost more than the sky. Nothing in Naples made a more enchanting impression on my mind than the sea, and I always feel happy when I see before me the spacious surface of waters.

The South, properly speaking, begins at Terracina.

This is another land, and every plant and every bush reminds you of it. Above all, the two mighty ridges of hills delighted me, between which the road runs; they were totally devoid of bushes or trees, but clothed entirely with masses of golden wallflowers, so that they had a bright yellow hue, and the fragrance was almost too strong. There is a great want of grass and large trees. The old nests of Fondi and Itri looked very piratical and gloomy. The houses are built against the solid rock, and there are likewise some large towers of the date of the Middle Ages. Many sentinels and posts were stationed on the tops of the hills; but we made out our journey without any adventure. We remained all night in Mola di Gaeta; there we saw the renowned balcony whence you look over orange and citron groves to the blue sea, with Vesuvius and the islands in the far distance. This was on the 11th of April. As I had been celebrating your birthday all day long in my own thoughts, I could not in the evening resist informing my companions that it was your birthday; so your health was drunk again and again. An old Englishman, who was of the party, wished me "a happy return to my sister." I emptied the glass to your health, and thought of you. May I find you as I left you!

With such thoughts in my head, I walked up and down in the evening in the citron-garden, close to the sea-shore, and listened to the waves rolling in from afar, and breaking on the shore, and sometimes gently rip-

pling and splashing. It was indeed a heavenly night. Among a thousand other thoughts, Grillparzer's poem recurred to my memory, which strictly speaking it is impossible to set to music; for which reason, I suppose, Fanny has composed it charmingly; but I do not jest when I say that I sang the song over repeatedly to myself, for I was standing on the very spot he describes. The sea had subsided, and was now calm, and at rest; this was the first song. The second followed next day, for the sea was like a meadow or pure ether as you gazed at it, and pretty women nodded their heads, and so did olives and cypresses; but they were all equally brown, so I remained in a poetic mood.

What is it that shines through the leaves, and glitters like gold? Cartridge-boxes and sabres; for the King had been reviewing some troops in Sant' Agata, and soldiers defiled on both sides of the path, who had the more merit in my eyes because they resembled the Prussians, and for a long time past I have seen only Papal soldiers. Some carried dark-lanterns on their muskets, as they had been marching at night. The whole effect was bold and gay. We now came to a short rocky pass, from which you descend into the valley of Campana, the most enchanting spot I have ever seen; it is like a boundless garden, covered entirely with plants and vegetation as far as the eye can reach. On one side the blue sea-line, on the other an undulating range of hills beyond which snowy peaks appear; and at a great distance Vesuvius and the islands, bathed in

blue vapours, towering above the level surface; large avenues of trees intersect the vast space, and a verdant growth forces its way from under every stone. Everywhere you see grotesque aloes and cactuses, and the fragrance and luxuriance of vegetation are quite unparalleled.

What man does for England, nature does for Italy; as in England there is no spot, however small, of which some one has not taken possession in order to cultivate and adorn it, so here there is no spot which Nature has not appropriated, bringing forth on it flowers and herbs, and all that is beautiful. The Campana valley is fruitfulness itself. On the whole of the vast immeasurable surface, bounded in the far distance by blue hills and a blue sea, nothing but green meets the eye. At last you come to Capua. I cannot blame Hannibal for remaining too long there. From Capua to Naples the road runs uninterruptedly between trees, and hanging vines, till at the end of the avenue, Vesuvius, and the sea, with Capri, and a mass of houses, lie before you. I am living here in St. Lucia as if in heaven; for in the first place I see before me Vesuvius, and the hills as far as Castellamare, and the Bay; and in the second place, I am living up three stories high. Unfortunately that knave Vesuvius is not smoking at all, and looks precisely like any other fine mountain; but at night to make amends, the people float in lighted boats on the Bay, to catch sword-fish. This has a pretty enough effect. Farewell! FELIX.

Naples, April 20th, 1831.

We are so accustomed to find that everything turns out quite differently from what we expected and calculated, that you will feel no surprise when instead of a letter like a journal, you receive a very short one, merely saying that I am quite well, and little else.

As for the scenery, I cannot describe it, and if you have no conception of what it really is, after all that has been said and written on the subject, there is little chance of my enlightening you; for what makes it indescribably beautiful, is its being past description. Any other detail I could send you would be about my life here: but it is so simple, that a very few words suffice to depict it. I do not wish to make any acquaintances, for I shall only remain a few weeks actually here, as I intend making various excursions in the vicinity, and wish to become thoroughly intimate with the country: so I go to bed at nine o'clock, and rise at five, to refresh myself by gazing from my balcony at Vesuvius, the sea, and the coast of Sorrento, in the bright morning light. I have also taken very long solitary rambles, discovering beautiful views for myself, and I have infinite satisfaction in finding that what I consider the loveliest spot of all is almost entirely unknown to the Neapolitans. For these excursions I singled out some house on a height, to which I scrambled up; or else merely followed my own whim, allowing myself to be surprised by night and moonshine, and making acquaintance with vine dressers, in order to learn my way back; so as at

last to reach home about nine o'clock, very tired, through the Villa Reale. The view from this villa, of the sea and the enchanting Capri by moonlight, the almost overpowering fragrance of the acacias in full bloom, the fruit-trees scattered all over with rose-coloured blossoms, looking like trees with pink foliage,—all this is indeed quite indescribable.

As I live chiefly with and in nature, I can write less than usual; perhaps we may talk it over when we meet, and the views in our sitting-room at home will furnish materials and reminiscences for conversation. One thing I must not however omit, dear Fanny, which is, that I quite approve of your taste when I recall what you told me years ago that your favourite spot was the island of Nisida. Perhaps you may have forgotten this, but I have not. It looks as if it were made expressly for pleasure-grounds. On emerging from the wood of Bagnuolo, Nisida has quite a startling effect, rising out of the sea, so near, so large and so green; while the other islands, Procida, Ischia, and Capri stand afar off, and indistinct in their blue tints. After the murder of Cæsar, Brutus took refuge in this island, and Cicero visited him there; the sea lay between them then, and the rocks, covered with vegetation, bent over the sea, just as they do now. *These* are the antiquities that interest me, and are infinitely more suggestive than crumbling mason-work. There is a degree of innate superstition and dishonesty among the people here that is totally inconceivable, and this has often even marred my pleasure in nature; for

the Swiss, of whom my Father complained so much, are positively guileless, primitive beings, compared with the Neapolitans. My landlord invariably gives me too little change for a piastre, and when I tell him of it, he coolly fetches the remainder. The only acquaintances I intend to make here are musical ones, that I may leave nothing incomplete,—for instance Fodor, who does not sing in public, Donizetti, Coccia, etc.

I now conclude by a few words to you, dear Father. You write to me that you disapprove of my going to Sicily; I have consequently given up this plan, though I cannot deny that I do so with great reluctance, for it was really more than a mere *whim* on my part. There is no danger to be apprehended, and, as if on purpose to vex me, a steamer leaves this city on the 4th of May, which is to make the entire tour; and a good many Germans, and probably the minister here, are to take advantage of it. I should have liked to see a mountain vomiting forth flames, as Vesuvius have been hitherto so unkind as not even to smoke. Your instructions however have till now so entirely coincided with my own inclinations, that I cannot allow the first opportunity I have of showing my obedience to your wishes (even when opposed to my own), to pass without complying with them, so I have effaced Sicily from my travelling route. Perhaps we may meet sooner in consequence of this; and now farewell, for I am going to walk to Capo di Monte.

FELIX.

Naples, April 27th, 1831.

It is now nearly a fortnight since I have heard from you. I do earnestly hope that nothing unpleasant has occurred, and every day I expect the post will bring me tidings of you all. My letters from Naples are of little value, for I am too deeply absorbed here to be able easily to extricate myself, and to write descriptive letters. Besides, when we had bad weather lately, I took advantage of it to resume my labours, and zealously applied myself to my "Walpurgis Night," which daily increases in interest for me, so I employ every spare moment in completing it. I hope to finish it in a few days, and I think it will turn out well. If I continue as much in the vein as now, I shall finish my Italian symphony also in Italy, in which case I shall have a good stock to bring home with me, the fruits of this winter. Moreover every day I have something new to see. I generally make my excursions with the Schadows.

Yesterday we went to Pompeii. It looks to me like a city half burnt down, and recently deserted. As both of these always seem to be deeply affecting, the impression it made on me was the most melancholy that I have yet experienced in Italy. It is as if the inhabitants had just gone out, and yet almost every object tells of another religion and another life; in short, of seventeen hundred years ago; and the French and English ladies scramble about it as gaily as possible, and make their sketches. It is the old tragedy of the Past and the Present, a problem I never can solve. Merry Naples is

indeed a pleasant contrast; but it is painful to see the crowd of wretched beggars who waylay you in every street and path, swarming round the carriage the instant it stops. The old white-haired men particularly distress me, and such a mass of misery exceeds all belief. If, walking on the sea-shore, and gazing at the islands, you chance to look round at the land, you find yourself the centre of a group of cripples, who make a trade or their infirmities; or you find (which lately happened to me) that you are surrounded by thirty or forty children, all whining out their favourite phrase, "Muoio di fame," and rattling their jaws to show that they have nothing to eat. All this forms a most repulsive contrast; and yet to me it is still more repugnant that you must forego the great pleasure of seeing happy faces: for even when you have given the handsomest gratuities to attendants, waiters, or workpeople, in short, to whom you will, the invariable rejoinder is, "Niente di più?" in which case you may be very sure that you have given too much. If it is the proper sum they give it back with the greatest indignation, and then return and beg to have it again. These are trifles, certainly, but they show the lamentable condition of the people. I have even gone so far as to feel provoked with the perpetual smiling aspect of nature, when in the most retired spots troops of beggars everywhere assailed me, some even accompanying me a mile on my way. It is only when I am quietly seated in my own room, gazing down on the Bay, and on Vesuvius, that being totally alone with them I feel really cheerful and happy.

To-day we are to ascend the hill to visit the Camaldoli Monastery, and to-morrow, if the weather permits, we proceed to Procida and Ischia. I go this evening to Madame Fodor's with Donizetti, Benedict, etc. She is very kind and amiable towards me, and her singing has given me great pleasure, for she has wonderful flexibility, and executes her *fiorituri* with so much taste, that it is easy to see how many things Sonntag acquired from her, especially the *mezza voce*, which Fodor, whose voice is no longer full and fresh, most prudently and judiciously introduces into many passages. As she does not sing at the theatre, I am most fortunate in having made her acquaintance personally. The theatre is now closed for some weeks, because the blood of St. Januarius is shortly to liquefy. What I heard at the opera previously did not repay the trouble of going. The orchestra, like that in Rome, was worse than in any part of Germany, and there was not even one tolerable female singer. Tamburini alone, with his vigorous bass voice, imparted some life to the whole. Those who wish to hear Italian operas, must nowadays go to Paris or London. Heaven grant that this may not eventually be the case with German music also!

I must however return to my "Witches," so you must forgive my not writing any more to-day. This whole letter seems hovering in uncertainty, or rather I am myself, as to whether I shall introduce the big drum or not in my "Walpurgis Night." "Zacken, Gabeln, und wilde Klapperstöcke," seem to force me to the big

drum, but moderation dissuades me. I certainly am the only person who ever composed for the scene on the Brocken without employing a piccolo-flute, but I can't help regretting the big drum, and before I can receive Fanny's advice, the "Walpurgis Night" will be finished and packed up. I shall be off again on my travels, and Heaven knows what I may have in my head by that time. I feel convinced that Fanny would say *yes;* still, I feel very doubtful; at all events a vast noise is indispensable.

Oh, Rebecca! can you not procure the words of some songs, and send them to me? I feel quite in the humour for them, and you must require something new to sing. If you can furnish me with some pretty verses, old or new, gay or grave, I will mould them somehow into the compass of your voice. I am at your service for any other commissions of this kind, only pray send me something to work at, during my journey, in the inns. Now, farewell to you all! May you be as happy as I ever wish you to be, and think of me!

FELIX.

Naples, May 17th, 1831.

On Saturday, the 14th of May, at two o'clock, I told my driver to turn the carriage. We had reached the Temple of Ceres at Pæstum, the most southern point of my journey. The carriage consequently turned towards the north, and from that moment, as I journey onwards,

I am every hour drawing nearer to you. It is about a year now since I travelled with my father to Dessau and Leipzig; the time in fact exactly corresponds, for it was about the half-year. I have made good use of the past year. I have acquired considerable experience and many new impressions. Both in Rome and here I have been very busy, but no change has occurred in my outward circumstances; and till the beginning of the new year, in fact so long as I am in Italy, it will probably be the same. This period has not however been less valuable to me than some when outwardly, and in the opinion of others, I have appeared to make greater progress; for there must always be a close connection between the two. If I have been imbibing right principles, they cannot fail to influence me outwardly, and I shall waste no opportunity of allowing them to do so. Possibly some such may occur before the end of my journey, so I may for the present continue to enjoy nature, and the blue sky, during the months that still remain for me in Italy, without thinking of anything else; the only true art, now in Italy,—is her nature and her monuments; and these are everlasting, and will give us subjects for study and delight, so long as Vesuvius stands, and so long as the balmy air, and the sea, and the trees do not pass away.

In spite of all this, I am enough of a musician to own that I do heartily long once more to hear an orchestra or a full chorus where there is at least some sound, for here there is nothing of the sort. This is *our* peculiar

province, and to be so long deprived of such an element, leaves a sad void. The orchestra and chorus here are like those in our second-rate provincial towns, only more rugged and incorrect. The first violinist, all through the opera, beats the four quarters of each bar on a tin candlestick, which is often more distinctly heard than the voices (it sounds somewhat like *obbligati* castanets, only louder); and yet in spite of this the instruments and voices are never together. Every little instrumental solo is adorned with old-fashioned flourishes, and bad taste pervades the whole performance, which is totally devoid of genius, fire, or spirit. The singers are the worst Italian ones I ever heard anywhere (except, indeed, in Italy), and those who wish to have a true idea of Italian singing must go to Paris or to London. Even the Dresden company, whom I heard last year in Leipzig, are superior to any here. This is but natural, for in the boundless misery that prevails universally here, where can resources be found for a theatre, which of course requires considerable capital? The days when every Italian was a born musician, if indeed they ever existed, are long gone by. They treat music like any other fashionable article, with total indifference; in fact, they scarcely pay it the homage of outward respect, so it is not to be wondered at that every single person of talent, as regularly as he arises, should transfer himself to foreign countries, where he is better appreciated, his position better defined, and where he finds opportunities of hearing and learning something profitable and inspiriting.

The only really good singer here is Tamburini; he has, however, long since been heard in Vienna and Paris, and I believe in London also; so now, when he begins to discover that his voice is on the decline, he comes back to Italy. I cannot admit either that the Italians alone understand the art of singing; for there is no music, however florid, I have ever heard executed by Italians, that Sonntag cannot accomplish, and in even greater perfection. She certainly, as she acknowledges, learned much from Fodor; but why should not another German in turn learn the same from Sonntag? and Malibran is a Spaniard. Italy can no longer claim the glorious appellation of "the land of music;" she has already lost it in fact, and possibly may yet do so even in common opinion, fallacious though it be. I was lately in company with some professional musicians, who were speaking of a new opera by a Neapolitan, Coccia; and one of them asked if it was clever. "Probably it is," said another, "for Coccia was long in England, where he studied, and some of his compositions are much liked there." This struck me as very remarkable, for in England they would have spoken exactly in the same way of Italy; but *quo me rapis?* I say nothing to you, dear sisters, in this letter, but in the course of a few days I mean to send you a little pamphlet dedicated to you. Do not be alarmed, it is not poetry; the thing is simply entitled "Journal of an Excursion to the Islands, in May."

FELIX.

Naples, May 28th, 1831.

My dear Sisters,

As my journal turned out too thin in bulk and too poor in matter to send you, I must at least supply you with a summary of my narrative. Learn then, that on Friday, the 20th of May, breakfast was made *in corpore* at Naples, the breakfast means fruit etc., the *in corpore* means our travelling party to the Islands, consisting of Ed. Bendemann, T. Hildebrand, Carl Sohn, and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. My knapsack was not very heavy, for it contained scarcely anything but Goethe's poems, and three shirts; so we packed ourselves into a hired carriage, and drove through the grotto of Posilippo to Pozzuoli. The road runs along by the sea, and nothing can be more lovely; so it is all the more painful to witness the horrible collection of cripples, blind men, beggars, and galley slaves, in short, the poor wretches of every description who there await you, amid the holiday aspect of nature.

I seated myself quietly on the mole and sketched, while the others plodded and toiled through the Temple of Serapis, the theatres, the hot springs, and extinct volcanoes, which I had already seen to satiety on three different occasions. Then, like youthful patriarchs or nomads, we collected all our goods and chattels, cloaks, knapsacks, books and portfolios on donkeys, and placing ourselves also on them, made the tour of the Bay of Baiæ, as far as the Lake of Avernus, where you are obliged to buy fish for dinner; we then crossed the hill to Cumæ

(*vide* Goethe's 'Wanderer') and descended on Baiæ, where we ate and rested. We then looked at more ruined temples, ancient baths, and other things of the kind, and thus evening had arrived before we crossed the bay.

At half-past nine we arrived at the little town of Ischia, where we found every corner of the only inn fully occupied, so we resolved to go on to Don Tommaso; a journey of two hours nominally, but which we hurried over in an hour and a quarter. The evening was deliciously cool, and innumerable glow-worms, who allowed us to catch them, were scattered on the vine-branches, and fig-trees, and shrubs. When we at last arrived, somewhat fatigued, at Don Tommaso's about eleven o'clock, we found all the people still up, clean rooms, fresh fruits, and a friendly deacon to wait on us, so we remained comfortably seated opposite a heap of cherries till midnight. The next morning the weather was bad, and the rain incessant, so we could not ascend the Epomeo, and as we seemed little disposed to converse (we did not get on in this respect, Heaven knows why!) the affair would have become rather a bore, if Don Tommaso had not possessed the prettiest poultry-yard and farm in Europe. Right in front of the door stands a large leafy orange-tree covered with ripe fruit, and from under its branches a stair leads to the dwelling. Each of the white stone steps is decorated with a large vase of flowers, these steps leading to a spacious open hall, whence through

an archway you look down on the whole farmyard, with its orange-trees, stairs, thatched roofs, wine casks and pitchers, donkeys, and peacocks. That a foreground may not be wanting, an Indian fig-tree stands under the walled arch, so luxuriant that it is fastened to the wall with ropes. The background is formed by vineyards with summer-houses, and the spurs of Monte Epomeo. Being protected from the rain by the archway, we all four seated ourselves under it, and sketched the various objects in the farmyard the best way we could, the whole livelong day. I didn't mind what they might think, and sketched away along with the artists, and I think in some degree profited by so doing. At night we had a terrific storm, and as I was lying in bed, I remarked that the thunder-claps reverberated tremendously on Monte Epomeo, as they do on the Lake of Lucerne, but even for a greater length of time.

Next morning, Sunday, the weather seemed fine. We went to Foria, and saw the people going to the cathedral in their holiday costumes. The women wore their well-known head-dress of folds of white muslin placed flat on the head; the men were standing in the square before the church, in their bright red caps, gossiping about politics, and we gradually wound our way through these festal villages up the hill. It is a huge rugged volcano, full of fissures, ravines, caves, and steep precipices. The caves, being used for wine cellars, are filled with large casks. Every declivity is

clothed with vines and fig-trees, or mulberry-trees. Corn grows on the sides of the steep rocks, and yields more than one crop every year. The ravines are covered with ivy, and innumerable bright-coloured flowers and herbs, and wherever there is a vacant space, young chestnut-trees shoot up, furnishing the most delightful shade. The last village, Fontana, lies in the midst of verdure and vegetation. As we climbed higher, the sky became overcast and gloomy, and by the time we reached the most elevated peaks of the rocks, a thick fog had come on. The mists flitted about, and although the rugged outlines of the rocks, and the telegraph, and the cross, stood forth strangely in the clouds, still we could not see even the smallest portion of the view. Then it began to rain, and as it was impossible to remain, and wait as you do on the Righi, we were obliged to take leave of Epomeo without having made his acquaintance. We ran down in the rain, one rushing after the other, and I do believe that we were scarcely an hour in returning.

Next day we drove to Capri. This place has something Eastern in its aspect, with the glowing heat reflected from its rocky white walls, its palm-trees, and the round domes of the churches that look like mosques. The sirocco was burning, and rendered me quite unfit to enjoy anything; for really climbing up five hundred and thirty-seven steps to Anacapri in this frightful heat, and then coming down again, is toil only fit for a horse. True, the sea is wondrously lovely, looking down on

it from the summit of the bleak rock, and through the singular fissures of the jagged peaks, so strangely formed.

But above all, I must tell you of the blue grotto, for it is not known to every one, as you can only enter it either in very calm weather, or by swimming. The rocks there project precipitously into the sea, and are probably as steep under the water as above it. A huge cavity has been hollowed out by nature, but in such a manner, that round the whole circumference of the grotto, the rocks rest on the sea in all their breadth, or rather are sunk precipitously into it, and ascend thence to the vault of the cavern. The sea fills the whole space of the grotto, the entrance to which lies under the water, only a very small portion of the opening appearing above the water, and through this narrow space you can only pass in a small boat, in which you must lie flat. When you are once in, the whole extent of the huge cave and its vault is revealed, and you can row about in it with perfect ease, as if under a dome. The sunlight also pierces through the opening into the grotto underneath the sea, but refracted and dimmed by the green sea-water, and thence it is that such magical visions arise. The whole of the high rocks are sky-blue, and green in the twilight, resembling the hue of moonshine, yet every nook, and every depth, is distinctly visible. The water is thoroughly lighted up and brilliantly illuminated by the light of the sun, so that the dark skiff glides over a bright shining surface. The

colour is the most dazzling blue I ever saw, without shadow or cloud, like a pane of opal glass; and as the sun shines down, you can plainly discern all that is going on under the water, while the whole depths of the sea with its living creatures are disclosed. You can see the coral insects and polypuses clinging to the rocks, and far below, fishes of different species meeting and swimming past each other. The rocks become deeper in colour as they approach the water, and are quite black where they meet it, and still further under them, you can see crabs, fishes, and reptiles in the clear waters. Every stroke too of the oars echoes strangely under the vault, and as you row round the walls, new objects come to light. I do wish you could see it, for the effect is singularly magical. On turning towards the opening by which you entered, the daylight seen through it seems bright orange, but only penetrates a yard or two, so that, in fact, you are entirely isolated under the rock in the sea, with its own peculiar sunlight: it makes one almost fancy living under water for a time.

We then crossed to Procida, where the women adopt the Greek dress, but do not look at all prettier from doing so. Curious faces were peeping from every windaw. A couple of Jesuits, in black gowns and with gloomy countenances, were seated in a gay arbour of vines, evidently enjoying themselves, and made a good picture. Then we crossed the sea to Pozzuoli, and through the grotto of Posilippo again home.

I cannot write to Paul about his change of residence, and his entrance into the great, wide world of London, because he mentions casually, that he will probably leave for London in the course of three weeks, so my letter could not possibly reach him in Berlin; a week hence I shall take my chance, and address to my brother in London. That smoky nest is fated to be now and ever my favourite residence; my heart swells when I even think of it, and when I picture to myself my return there, passing through Paris, and finding Paul independent, alone, and another man, in the dear old haunts; how he will present me to his new friends, and I will present him to my old ones, and we shall live together, I feel already all impatience to be there. I see by some newspapers my friends have sent me, that my name is not forgotten, and so I hope when I return to London, to be able to work steadily, which I was previously unable to do, being forced to go to Italy. If they make any difficulty in Munich about my opera, or if I cannot get a *libretto* that I like, I intend to compose an opera for London, for I know that I could receive a commission to do so, as soon as I chose. I am also bringing some new pieces with me for the Philharmonic, and so I shall have made good use of my time.

As my evenings here are at my own disposal, I read a little French and English. The "Barricades" and "Les Etats de Blois" particularly interest me, as while I read them, I realize with horror a period which we

have often heard extolled as a vigorous epoch, too soon passed away. Though these books seem to me to have many faults, yet the delineation of the two opposite leaders, is but too correct; both were weak, irresolute, miserable hypocrites, and I thank God that the so highly-prized middle ages are gone never to return. Say nothing of this to any disciple of Hegel's, but it is so nevertheless; and the more I read and think on the subject, the more I feel this to be true. Sterne has become a great favourite of mine. I remembered that Goethe once spoke to me of the 'Sentimental Journey,' and said that it was impossible for any one better to paint what a froward and perverse thing is the human heart. I chanced to meet with the book, and thought I should like to read it. It pleases me very much. I think it very subtle, and beautifully conceived and expressed.

There are very few German books to be had here. I am therefore restricted to Goethe's Poems, and assuredly these are suggestive enough, and always new. I feel while here especial interest in those poems which he avowedly composed in or near Naples, such as Alexis and Dora; for I daily see from my window how this wonderful work was created. Indeed, which is often the case with master-pieces, I often suddenly and involuntarily think, that the very same ideas might have occurred to myself on a similar occasion, and as if Goethe had only by some chance been the first to express them.

With regard to the poem, "Gott segne dich, junge Frau," I maintain that I have discovered its locality, and dined with the woman herself; but of course she is now grown old, and the boy she was then nursing is become a stalwart vine-dresser. He house, "eines Tempels Trümmern," lies between Pozzuoli and Baiæ, and is fully three miles from Cumæ. You may imagine therefore with what new light and truth these poems dawn on me, and the different feeling with which I now regard and study them. I say nothing of Mignon's song at present, but it is singular that Goethe and Thorwaldsen are still living, that Beethoven only died a few years ago, and yet H—— declares that German art is as dead as a rat. *Quod non.* So much the worse for him if he really feels thus; but when I reflect for a time on his arguments, they appear to me very shallow. *Apropos,* Schadow, who returns to Düsseldorf in the course of a few days, has promised to extract, if possible, some new songs for me from Immermann, which rejoices me much. That man is a true poet, which is proved by his letters, and everything that he has written. Count Platen is a little shrivelled, wheezing old man, with gold spectacles, yet not more than five-and-thirty! He quite startled me. The Greeks look very different! He abuses the Germans terribly, forgetting however that he does so in German. But I am beginning to gossip, so farewell for to-day.

FELIX.

Rome, June 6th, 1831.

My dear Parents,

It is high time that I should write to you a rational, methodical letter, for I fear that none of those from Naples were worth much. It really seemed as if the atmosphere there deterred every one from serious reflection, at least I very seldom succeeded in collecting my thoughts or ideas; and now I have been scarcely more than a few hours here, when I once more resume that Roman tranquillity, and cheerful serenity, which I alluded to in my former letters from this place. I cannot express how infinitely better I love Rome than Naples. People allege that Rome is monotonous, of one uniform hue, melancholy, solitary. It is certainly true that Naples is more like a great European city, more lively, more varied, and more cosmopolitan; but I may say to you confidentially, that I begin gradually to feel the most decided hatred of all that is cosmopolitan; —I dislike it, just as I dislike *versatility*, which, moreover, I rather think I do not much believe in. Anything that aspires to be distinguished, or beautiful, or really great, must be *one-sided;* but then this *one side* must be brought to a state of the most consummate perfection, and no man can deny that such is the case at Rome.

Naples seems to me too small to be called properly a great city; all the life and bustle are confined to two large thoroughfares—the Toledo, and the coast from the harbour to the Chiaja. Naples does not suggest to

my mind the idea of a centre for a great nation, which London does in such perfection; chiefly indeed because it is deficient in a people: for the fishermen and lazzaroni I cannot designate as a people, they are more like savages, and their centre is not Naples, but the sea. The middle classes, by which I mean those who pursue various trades, and the working citizens who form the basis of other great towns, are quite subordinate; indeed, I may almost say that such a class is not to be found there. It was this that often made me feel out of humour during my stay in Naples, much as I loved and enjoyed the environs; but as a dissatisfied feeling constantly recurred, I think I at last learnt the cause of it from my own personal experience. I cannot say that I was precisely unwell during the incessant sirocco, but it was more disagreeable than an indisposition which passes away in a few days. I felt languid, disinclined for all that was serious,—in fact, lazy. As I lounged about the streets all day with a morose face, and would have preferred lying on the ground, without the trouble of thinking, or wishing, or doing anything, it suddenly occurred to me, that the principal classes in Naples live in reality precisely in the same manner; that consequently the source of my depression did not spring from myself, as I had feared, but from the whole combination of air, climate, etc. The atmosphere is suitable for grandees who rise late, never require to go out on foot, never think (for this is heating), sleep away a couple of hours on a sofa in the afternoon, then eat ice,

and drive to the theatre at night, where again they find no subject for thought, but simply make and receive visits. On the other hand, the climate is equally suitable for a fellow in a shirt, with naked legs and arms, who also has no occasion to exert himself—begging for a few *grani* when he has literally nothing left to live on —taking his afternoon's siesta stretched on the ground, or on the quay, or on the stone pavement (the pedestrians step over him, or shove him aside if he lies right in the middle). He fetches his *frutti di màre* himself out of the sea, sleeps wherever he may chance to find himself at night; in short, he employs every moment in doing exactly what he likes best, just as a brute does.

These are the two principal classes of Naples. By far the largest portion of the population of the Toledo there, consists of gaily-dressed ladies and gentlemen, or husbands and wives driving together in handsome equipages, or of those olive *sans-culottes* who sometimes carry about fish for sale, crying in the most stentorian way, or bearing burdens when they have no longer any money left. I believe there are few indeed who have any settled occupation, or follow up any pursuit with zeal and perseverance, or who like work for work's sake. Goethe says that the misfortune of the North is, that people there always wish to be doing something, and striving after some end; and he goes on to say, that an Italian was right, who advised him not to think so much, for it would only give him a headache. He must however have been merely jesting; at all events, he did

not act in this manner himself, but, on the contrary, like a genuine Northman. If however he means that the difference of character is produced by nature, and subservient to her influence, then there is no doubt that he is quite in the right. I can perfectly conceive that it must be so, and why wolves howl; still it is not necessary to howl along with them. The proverb should be exactly reversed. Those who, owing to their position, are obliged to work, and must consequently both think and bestir themselves, treat the matter as a necessary evil, which brings them in money, and when they actually have it, they too live like the great, or the naked gentlemen. Thus there is no shop where you are not cheated. Natives of Naples, who have been customers for many years, are obliged to bargain, and to be as much on their guard as foreigners; and one of my acquaintances, who had dealt at the same shop for fifteen years, told me that during the whole of that period there had been invariably the same battle about a few scudi, and that nothing could prevent it.

Thence it is that there is so little industry or competition, and that Donizetti finishes an opera in ten days; to be sure, it may be hissed, but that does not matter, for it is paid for all the same, and he can then go about amusing himself. If at last however his reputation should become endangered, he would in that case be forced really to work, which he would find by no means agreeable. Therefore he sometimes spends as much as three weeks on an opera, bestowing consider-

able pains on a couple of airs in it, so that they may please the public, and then he can afford once more to divert himself, and once more to write trash. Their painters, in the same way, paint the most incredibly bad pictures, far inferior even to their music. Their architects also erect buildings in the worst taste; among others, an imitation, on a small scale, of St. Peter's, in the Chinese style. But what does it matter? the pictures are bright in colour, the music makes plenty of noise, the buildings give plenty of shade, and the Neapolitan grandees ask no more.

My physical mood was similar to theirs, everything inspiring me with a wish to be idle, and to lounge about, and sleep; yet I was constantly saying to myself that this was wrong; and striving to occupy myself, and to work, which I could not accomplish. Hence arose the querulous tone of some of the letters I wrote to you, and I could only escape from such a mood by rambling over the hills, where nature is so divine, making every man feel grateful and cheerful. I did not neglect making acquaintance with the musicians, and we had a great deal of music, but I could take little pleasure in their flattering encomiums. Fodor is hitherto the only genuine artist, male or female, that I have seen in Italy; elsewhere I should probably have found a great many faults with her singing, but I overlooked them all, because when she sings it is real music and after such a long privation, that was most acceptable.

Now however I am once more in old Rome, where

life is very different. There are processions daily, for last week was the Corpus Domini; and just as I left the city during the celebration of the week following the Holy Week, I now return after the Corpus Christi to find them engaged in the same way. It made a singular impression on me to see that the streets had in the interim assumed such an aspect of summer; on all sides booths with lemons and iced water, the people in light dresses, the windows open, and the *jalousies* closed. You sit at the doors of coffee-houses, and eat *gelato* in quantities; the Corso swarms with equipages, for people no longer walk much, and though in reality I miss no dear friends or relatives, yet I felt quite moved when I once more saw the Piazza di Spagna, and the familiar names written up on the corners of the streets. I shall stay here for about a week, and then proceed northwards.

The Infiorata is on Thursday, but it is not yet quite certain that it will take place, because they have some apprehensions of a revolution; but I hope I shall witness this ceremony. I mean to take advantage of this opportunity to see the hills once more, and then to set off for the north. Wish me a good journey, for I am on the eve of departure. It is a year this very day since I arrived in Munich, heard 'Fidelio,' and wrote to you. We have not met since then; but, please God, we shall see each other again before another year.

FELIX.

Rome, June 16th, 1831.

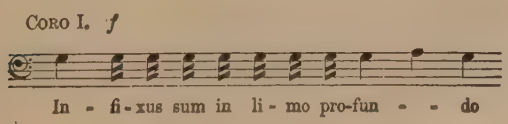
Dear Professor,

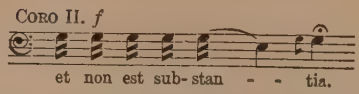
It was my intention to have written you long ago a description of the music during the Holy Week, but my journey to Naples intervened, and during my stay there, I was so constantly occupied in wandering among the mountains, and in gazing at the sea, that I had not a moment's quiet in which to write; hence arose the delay for which I now beg to apologize. Since then I have not heard a single note worth remembering; in Naples the music is most mediocre. During the last two months, therefore, I have no musical reminiscences to send you, save those of the Holy Week, no part of which do I think I have forgotten, and I hardly imagine that I ever shall. I have already described to my parents the general effect of the whole, and they probably have sent you the letter.

It was fortunate that I resolved to listen to the various Offices with calmness and close attention, and that notwithstanding, before they commenced I felt sensations of reverence and piety. I consider such a mood indispensable for the reception of new ideas, and thus I lost no portion of the general effect while exerting myself to watch each separate detail.

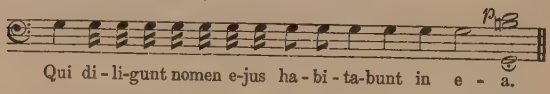
The ceremonies commenced on Wednesday, at half past four o'clock, with the antiphon "Zelus domus tuæ." A little book containing the Offices for the Holy Week explains the sense of the various solemnities. "Each Nocturn contains three Psalms, signifying that

"Christ died for the single, the married, and the "widowed, and also symbolical of the three covenants, "the natural, the written, and the evangelical. The "'Domine labia mea' and the 'Deus in adjutorium' "are not to be sung on this occasion, when the death "of our Saviour and Master is deplored, as slain by the "hands of wicked godless men. The fifteen lights re-"present the twelve apostles and the three Marys." (In this manner the book contains most extraordinary information on this subject, so I mean to bring it with me for you.) The Psalms are chanted *fortissimo* by two choirs of men's voices. Each verse is divided into two parts, like a question and answer, or rather, classified into A and B; the first chorus sings A, and the second replies with B. All the words, with the exception of the last, are sung with extreme rapidity on one note, but on the last they make a short "melisma," which is different in the first and second verse. The whole Psalm, with all its verses, is sung on this melody, or *tono* as they call it, and I wrote down seven of these *toni*, which were employed during the three days. You cannot conceive how tiresome and monotonous the effect is, and how harshly mechanically they chant through the Psalms. The first *tonus* which they sang was—





Thus the whole forty-two verses of the Psalm are sung in precisely the same manner; one half of the verse ending with G, A, G, the other with G, E, G. They sing with the accent of a number of men quarrelling violently, and it sounds as if each were always obstinately shouting the same words over and over again against his adversary. The closing words of each Psalm are chanted more slowly and impressively, a long "triad" being substituted for the "melisma," sung *piano.* For instance, this is the first:—



An antiphon, and sometimes more than one, serves as an introduction to each Psalm. These are generally sung by two counter-tenor voices, in *canto fermo,* very harshly and roughly; the first half of each first verse in the same style, and the second responded to by the chorus of men's voices that I already described. I have kept the several antiphons that I wrote down, that you may compare them with the book. On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 68th, 69th, and 70th Psalms were sung. (By the bye, this division of the verses of the Psalms sung alternately by two choirs, is one of the arrangements that Bunsen has introduced into the Evangelical Church here; he also ushers in each choral by an antiphon, composed by Georg, a musician here, in

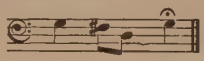
the style of the *canti fermi;* they are first sung by a few voices, and then the choral itself comes in: for instance, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott.") After the 70th Psalm comes a paternoster *sub silentio*—that is, all present stand up, and a short silent inward prayer ensues, and a pause.

Then commences the first Lamentation of Jeremiah, sung in a low subdued tone, in the key of G major, a solemn and fine composition of Palestrina's. It is sung entirely by high tenor voices, swelling and subsiding alternately, in the most delicate gradations, sometimes dying away till almost inaudible, and gliding slowly from one harmony to another; being sung without any bass voices, and immediately succeeding the wild yelling of the Psalms, the effect is truly heavenly. It is rather unfortunate however that those very parts which ought to be sung with the deepest emotion and reverence, being evidently those composed with peculiar fervour, should chance to be merely the titles of the chapter or verse, *aleph, beth, gimel,* etc., and that the beautiful commencement, which sounds as if it came direct from Heaven, should be precisely on these words, "Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiæ Prophetæ Lectio I." This must be not a little repulsive to every Protestant heart, and if there be any design of introducing these hymns into our churches, it appears to me that this will always be a stumbling-block; for any one who sings "chapter first" cannot possibly feel any pious emotions, however beautiful the music may be, let him do as he will.

My little book indeed says, "Vedendo profetizzato il crocifiggimento con gran pietà, si cantano eziandio molto lamentevolmente *aleph*, e le altre simili parole, che sono le lettere dell' alfabeto Ebreo, perchè erano in costume di porsi in ogni canzone in luogo di lamento, come è questa. Ciascuna lettera ha in se, tutto il sentimento di quel versetto che la segue, ed è come un argomento di esso;" but this explanation is not worth much. After this, the 71st, 72nd, and 73rd Psalms are sung in the same manner, with their antiphons. These are apportioned to the different voices quite at random, so that the sopranos begin, "In monte Oliveti," then the basses chime in *forte*, "Oravit ad Patrem: Pater," etc. Then follow the lessons, from the treatise of St. Augustine on the Psalms. The strange mode in which these are chanted, struck me as most extraordinary when I heard it for the first time on Palm Sunday, without knowing what it meant. They are taken by one voice alone intoning on one note, not as in the Psalms, but very slowly and impressively, making the tone ring out clearly.

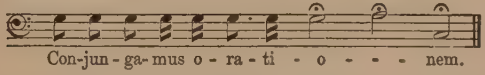
There are different cadences employed for the different punctuation of the words, to represent a comma, interrogation, and full-stop. Perhaps you are already acquainted with these: being quite new to me, they seemed very strange. The first, for example, was intoned by a fine bass voice on G. If a comma occurs, he sings so, on the last word:—

if an interrogation, thus :—

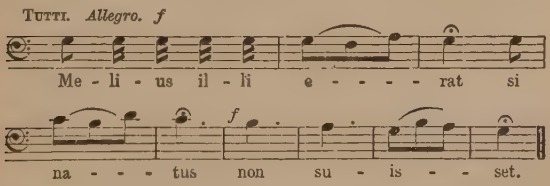


if a full-stop, thus :—

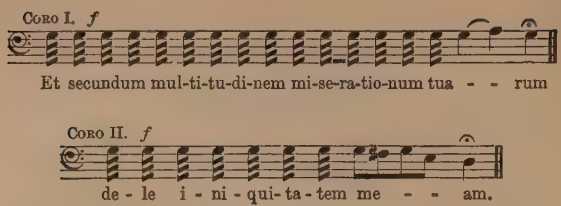
For example :—



I cannot describe to you how strange the fall from A to C sounds; especially when the bass is followed by a soprano, who begins on D, and makes the same cadence from E to G; then an alto does the same in his key; for they sang three different lessons alternately with the *canto fermo*. I send you a specimen of the mode in which they render the *canto fermo*, regardless both of the words and the sense. The phrase "better he had never been born" was thus sung :—



quite *fortissimo* and monotonously. Then came the Psalms 74, 75, and 76, followed by three lessons, succeeded by the Miserere, sung in the same style as the preceding Psalms, in the following *tonus* :—



You must rub your ears soundly to clear them for better things. Psalms 8, 62, and 66, "Canticum Moysi" (in its own tone), and Psalms 148, 149, and 150 follow; then some antiphons. Meanwhile the lights on the altar are all extinguished, save one which is hidden beneath it. Six wax candles still continue to burn high above the entrance, the rest of the space is already dim, and now the whole chorus begins the "Canticum Zachariæ" in unison, with the full strength of their voices, whilst the last remaining lights are being extinguished. The mighty swelling chorus in the gloom, and the solemn vibration of so many voices, have a wonderfully fine effect.

The melody (in D minor) is also very beautiful. At the close all is profound darkness. An antiphon begins on the sentence, "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign," and continues to the words, "that same is he, hold him fast." Then all present fall on their knees, and one solitary voice sings, *piano,* "Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem;" on the second day is added, "mortem autem crucis;" and on Good Friday, "propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum,

et dedit illi Nomen, quod est super omne nomen." A pause ensues, during which each person repeats the Paternoster to himself. During this silent prayer, a death-like silence prevails in the whole church; presently the Miserere commences, with a faint chord gradually swelling through both choirs. This beginning, and its first harmonious vibration, certainly made the deepest impression on me. For an hour and a half previously, single voices alone had been heard chanting almost without any variety; after the pause comes an admirably constructed chord, which has the finest possible effect, causing every one to feel in their hearts the power of music; it is this indeed that is so striking. The best voices are reserved for the Miserere, which is sung with the greatest variety of effect, *crescendo e diminuendo*, from the softest *piano* to the full strength of the choir. No wonder that it should excite deep emotion in every heart. Moreover they do not neglect the power of contrast; each alternate verse being chanted by all the male voices in unison, *forte*, and harshly, then in their turn at the beginning of the next, the lovely, rich, soft harmonies steal on the ear, lasting only for a short space, and interrupted by the chorus of male voices. During the verses sung in monotone, every one knows how beautifully the softer choir are about to uplift their voices; soon they are again heard, again to die away too quickly, and before the thoughts can be collected, the service is over.

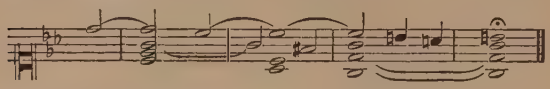
On the first day, when the Miserere of Baini was given

in the key of B minor, they sang thus :—" Miserere mei Deus" to " misericordiam tuam" from the music, with solo voices, two choirs using the whole strength of voices at their command ; then all the basses commenced *tutti forte* on F sharp, chanting on that note " et secundum multitudinem" to "iniquitatem meam," which is immediately succeeded by a soft chord in B minor, and so on, to the last verse of all, which they sing with their entire strength; a second short silent prayer ensues, when the Cardinals scrape their feet with all their might on the pavement, and so the ceremony ends. My little book says, "This noise is symbolical of the tumult made by the Hebrews, in seizing Christ." It may be so, but it sounded exactly like the commotion in the pit of a theatre, when the beginning of a play is delayed, or when it is finally condemned. The single taper still burning, is then brought from behind the altar, and all silently disperse by its solitary light; in contrast to which I must not omit to mention the striking effect on leaving the chapel, of the blazing chandelier lighting up the great vestibule, when the Cardinals and their attendant priests traverse the illuminated Quirinal through ranks of Swiss Guards. The Miserere sung on the first day was Baini's, a composition entirely devoid of life or power, like all his works; still it had chords and music, and so it made a certain impression.

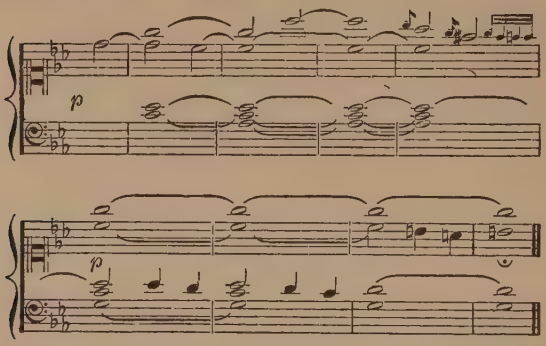
On the second day they gave some pieces by Allegri, on the succeeding ones by Bai; and on Good Friday all the music was Bai's. As Allegri composed only one

verse, on which the rest are all chanted, I heard the three compositions which they gave on that day. It is however quite immaterial which they sing, for the *embellimenti* are pretty much the same in all three. Each chord has its *embellimento,* thus very little of the original composition is to be discovered. How these *embellimenti* have crept in they will not say. It is maintained that they are traditional; but this I entirely disbelieve. In the first place, no musical tradition is to be relied on; besides, how is it possible to carry down a five-part movement to the present time, from mere hearsay? It does not sound like it. It is evident that they have been more recently added; and it appears to me that the director, having had good high voices at his command, and wishing to employ them during the Holy Week, wrote down for their use ornamental phrases, founded on the simple unadorned chords, to enable them to give full scope and effect to their voices. They certainly are not of ancient date, but are composed with infinite talent and taste, and their effect is admirable; one in particular is often repeated, and makes so deep an impression, that when it begins, an evident excitement pervades all present; indeed, in any discussion as to the mode of executing this music, when people say that the voices do not seem like the voices of men, but those of angels from on high, and that these sounds can never be heard elsewhere it is this particular *embellimento* to which they invariably allude. For example, in the Miserere, whether that of Bai or Allegri (for they

use the same *embellimenti* in both) these are the consecutive chords :—



Instead of this, they sing it so :—



The soprano intones the high C in a pure soft voice, allowing it to vibrate for a time, and slowly gliding down, while the alto holds the C steadily, so that at first I was under the delusion that the high C was still held by the soprano; the skill, too, with which the harmony is gradually developed, is truly admirable. The other *embellimenti* are adapted in the same way to the consecutive chords; but the first one is by far the most beautiful. I can give no opinion as to the particular mode of executing the music; but what I once read, that some peculiar acoustic contrivance caused the

continued vibration of the sounds, is an entire fable, quite as much so as the assertion that they sing from tradition, and without any fixed time, one voice simply following the other; for I saw plainly enough the shadow of Baini's long arm moving up and down; indeed, he sometimes struck his music-desk quite audibly. There is no lack of mystery too, on the part of the singers and others; for example, they never say beforehand what particular Miserere they intend to sing, but that it will be decided at the moment, etc. etc. The key in which they sing, depends on the purity of the voices. The first day it was in B minor, the second and third in E minor, but each time they finished almost in B flat minor.

The chief soprano, Mariano, came from the mountains to Rome expressly to sing on this occasion, and it is to him I owe hearing the *embellimenti* with their highest notes. However careful and attentive the singers may be, still the negligence and bad habits of the whole previous year have their revenge, consequently the most fearful dissonance sometimes occurs.

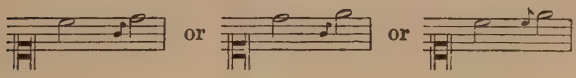
I must not forget to tell you that on the Thursday, when the Miserere was about to begin, I clambered up a ladder leaning against the wall, and was thus placed close to the roof of the chapel, so that I had the music, the priests, and the people far beneath me in gloom and shadow. Seated thus alone without the vicinity of any obtrusive stranger, the impression made on me was very profound. But to proceed: you must

have had more than enough of Misereres in these pages, and I intend to bring you more particular details, both verbal and written.

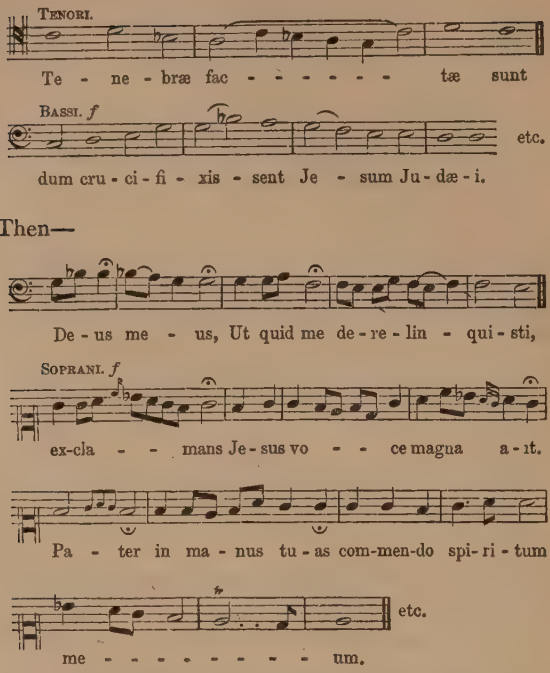
On Thursday, at half-past ten o'clock, High Mass was celebrated. They sang an eight-part composition of Fazzini's, in no way remarkable. I reserve for you some *canti fermi* and antiphons, which I wrote down at the time, and my little book describes the order of the various services and the meaning of the different ceremonies. At the "Gloria in Excelsis" all the bells in Rome peal forth, and are not rung again till after Good Friday; till which time the hours are marked in the churches by wooden clappers. The words of the "Gloria," the signal for all the strange tumult of bells, were chanted from the altar by old Cardinal Pacca, in a feeble trembling voice; this being succeeded by the choirs and all the bells, had a striking effect. After the "Credo" they sang the "Fratres ego enim" of Palestrina, but in the most unfinished and careless manner. The washing of the pilgrims' feet followed, and a procession in which all the singers join; Baini beating time from a large book carried before him, making signs first to one, and then to another, while the singers press forward to look at the music, counting the time as they walk, and then chiming in,—the Pope being borne aloft in his state chair. All this I have already described to my parents.

In the evening there were Psalms, Lamentations, Lessons, and the Miserere again, scarcely differing from

those of the previous day. One lesson was chanted to a peculiar melody (which I shall bring home with me), by a solo soprano. It was an adagio, in long sustained notes, and lasted certainly above a quarter of an hour. There was not a single pause in the part which lies very high, and yet it was executed with the most pure, clear, and even intonation. The singer's voice did not fall a hair's breadth, the very last notes swelling and dying away as evenly and roundly as at the beginning; it was masterly. I was struck with the meaning they attach to the word *appoggiatura.* If the melody goes from C to D, or from C to E, they sing thus:—



and this they call an *appoggiatura.* Whatever they may choose to designate it, the effect is most disagreeable, and it must require long habit not to be discomposed by this strange practice, which reminds me very much of our old women at home in church. With this exception the order was the same as the preceding day. I saw in my book that the "Tenebræ" was to be sung, and thinking that it would interest you to know how it is given in the Papal chapel, I was on the watch with a sharp-pointed pencil when it commenced, and send you herewith the principal parts. It was sung very quick, and *forte* throughout, without exception The beginning was:—



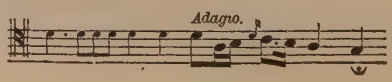
I cannot help it, but I own it does irritate me to hear such holy and touching words sung to such insignificant dull music. They say it is *canto fermo,* Gregorian, etc.; no matter. If at that period there was neither the feeling nor the capacity to write in a different style, at all events we have now the power to do so and, certainly this mechanical monotony is not to be found in the scriptural words; they are all truth and fresh-

ness, and moreover expressed in the most simple and natural manner. Why then make them sound like a mere formula? and, in truth, such singing as this is nothing more! The word "Pater" with a little flourish, the "meum" with a little shake, the "ut quid me"—can this be called sacred music? There is certainly no false expression in it, because there is *none* of any kind; but does not this very fact prove the desecration of the words? A hundred times during the ceremony I was driven wild by such things as these; and then came people in a state of ecstasy, saying how splendid it had all been. This sounded to me like a bad joke, and yet they were quite in earnest!

At Mass early on Friday morning, the chapel is stripped of all its decorations, the altar uncovered, and the Pope and Cardinals in mourning. The "Passion," from St. John, was sung, composed by Vittoria, but the words of the people in the chorus alone are his, the rest are chanted according to an established formula, whereof anon. The whole appeared to me too trivial and monotonous. I was quite out of humour, and, in fact, dissatisfied with the affair altogether. One of the two following modes ought to be adopted. The "Passion" ought either to be recited quietly by the priest, as St. John relates it, in which case there is no occasion for the chorus to sing "Crucifige eum," nor for the alto to represent Pilate—or else the scene should be so thoroughly realized, that it ought to make me feel as if I were actually present, and saw it all myself. In that

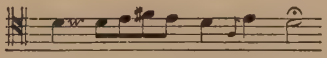
case, Pilate should sing just as he would have spoken, and the chorus shout out "Crucifige" in a tone anything but reverent; but then, by its absolute truthfulness, and the subject it represents, such singing becomes sacred music.

In such case I require no under-current of thought when I hear music, which to me is not, as they style it here, "a means of exciting to devotion," but a distinct language speaking plainly to me; and the sense is *expressed* by and contained in the words. This is the case with the "Passion" of Sebastian Bach; but as they sing it here, it is very imperfect, being neither a simple narrative, nor yet a grand solemn dramatic truth. The chorus sings "Barabbam" to the same sacred chords as "et in terra pax." Pilate speaks exactly in the same manner as the Evangelist, and if the voice that represents our blessed Saviour commences always *piano*, in order to have one definite distinction, yet when the chorus breaks loose, shouting out their sacred chords, it seems entirely devoid of meaning. Pray forgive these strictures. I now proceed to simple narration again. The Evangelist is a tenor, and the mode of chanting, the same as that of the Lessons, with a peculiar falling cadence at the comma, interrogation, and full-stop. The Evangelist intones on D, and sings thus at a full-stop:—

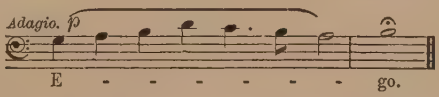


at a comma :—

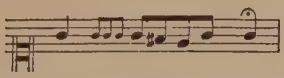
and at the conclusion, when another personage enters, so :—



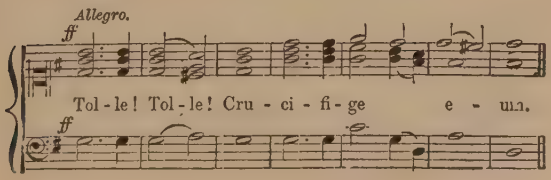
Christ is represented by a bass, and commences always thus :—



I could not catch the formula, though I noted down several parts, which I can show you when I return : among others, the words spoken on the Cross. All the other personages,—Pilate, Peter, the Maid, and the High Priest,—are altos, and sing this melody only :—

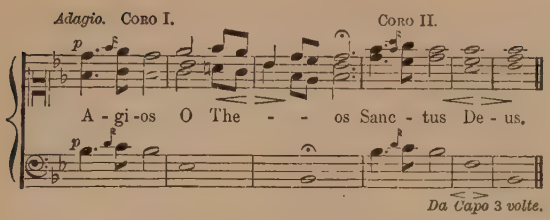


The chorus sing the words of the people from their places above, while everything else is sung from the altar. I must really mark down here as a curiosity the "Crucifige," just as I noted it at the time :—



The "Barabbam" too is most singular; very tame Jews indeed! But my letter is already too long, so I shall discuss the subject no further. Prayers are then offered up for all nations and institutions, each separately designated. When the prayer for the Jews is uttered, no one kneels, as they do at all the others, nor is Amen said. They pray *pro perfidis Judæis,* and the author of my book discovers an explanation of this also. Then follows the Adoration of the Cross; a small crucifix is placed in the centre of the chapel, and all approach barefooted (without shoes), fall down before it and kiss it; during this time the "Improperia" are sung. I have only once heard this composition, but it seems to me to be one of Palestrina's finest works, and they sing it with remarkable enthusiasm. There is surprising delicacy and concord in its execution by the choir; they are careful to place every passage in its proper light, and to render it sufficiently prominent without making it too conspicuous—one chord blending softly with the other. Moreover, the ceremony is very solemn and dignified, and the most profound silence reigns in the chapel.

They sing the oft-recurring Greek "Holy" in the most admirable manner, each time with the same smoothness and expression. You will be not a little surprised, however, when you see it written down, for they sing as follows:—



Such passages as that at the commencement, where all the voices sing the very same embellishment, repeatedly occur, and the ear becomes accustomed to them. The effect of the whole is undoubtedly superb. I only wish you could hear the tenor in the first chorus, and the mode in which he takes the high A on the word "Theos;" the note is so long-drawn and ringing, though softly breathed, that it sounds most touching. This is repeated again and again till all in the chapel have performed the Adoration of the Cross; but as on this occasion the crowd was not very great, I unluckily had not the opportunity of hearing it as often as I could have wished.

I quite understand why the "Improperia" produced the strongest effect on Goethe, for they are nearly the most faultless of all, as both music and ceremonies, and everything connected with them, are in the most entire harmony. A procession follows to fetch the Host, which had been exposed and adored on the previous evening in another chapel of the Quirinal, lighted up by many hundred wax-lights. The morning service closed at half-past one with a hymn in *canto fermo*. At

half-past three in the afternoon the first nocturn began, with the Psalms, Lessons, etc. I corrected what I had written down, heard Bai's Miserere, and about seven o'clock followed the Cardinals home through the illuminated vestibule,—so all was now seen, and all was now over.

I was anxious, dear Professor, to describe the Holy Week to you minutely, as they were memorable days to me, every hour bringing with it something interesting and long anticipated. I also particularly rejoiced in feeling that, in spite of the excitement and the numerous discussions in praise or blame, the whole affair made as vivid an impression on me, as if I had been quite free from all previous prejudice or prepossession. I thus saw the truth confirmed, that that which is perfect in itself, no matter in how strange a sphere it be presented, is perfect also in the impressions it produces. May you read this long letter with even half the pleasure I feel in recalling the period of the Holy Week at Rome.

Yours faithfully,
FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

Florence, June 25th, 1831.

Dear Sisters,

On such a day as this my paternal home and those I love are much in my thoughts; my feelings on this point are rather singular. If I feel at any time unwell,

or fatigued, or out of humour, I have no particular longing for my own home or for my family; but when brighter days ensue, when every hour makes an indelible impression, and every moment brings with it glad and pleasant sensations, then I ardently wish that I were with you, or you with me; and no minute passes without my thinking of one or other of you, to whom I have something particular to say.

I have to-day passed the whole forenoon, from ten till three, in the gallery; it was glorious! Besides all the beautiful work I saw, and all the new objects from which so much fresh knowledge is always to be derived, I wandered about in such delight among the pictures, feeling so much sympathy, and such kindly emotions in gazing at them. I now first thoroughly realized the great charm of a large collection of the highest works of art; that of being able to pass from one gem to another, sitting an hour, now before one, now before another, and dreaming over their beauties.

Yesterday was a holiday here, so to-day the Palazzo degli Uffizi was crowded with people who had come into the city to see the races, and to visit the far-famed gallery; chiefly peasants, male and female, in their country costumes. All the apartments were thrown open, and as I was about to contemplate them for the last time, I contrived to slip quietly through the crowd, and to remain quite solitary, for I knew that I had not one acquaintance among them.

The busts of the various princes who founded and

enriched this collection, are placed near the entrance, at the top of the staircase. I suppose I must have been peculiarly susceptible to-day, for the faces of the Medici interested me exceedingly; they looked so noble and refined, so proud and so dignified. I stood looking at them for a long time, and imprinted on my memory those countenances of world-wide renown.

I then went to the Tribune. This room is so delightfully small you can traverse it in fifteen paces, and yet it contains a world of art. I again sought out my favourite armchair, which stands under the statue of the "Slave Whetting his Knife" (*L'Arrotino*), and taking possession of it, I enjoyed myself for a couple of hours; for here, at one glance, I had the 'Madonna del Cardellino,' 'Pope Julius II.,' a female portrait by Raphael, and above it a fine picture of Saints, by Perugino; and so close to me that I could have touched the statue with my hand, the Venus de' Medici; beyond, that of Titian; on the other side, the 'Apollino' and the 'Wrestlers' (*Lottatori*); in front of the Raphael, the merry Greek Dancing Faun, who seems to feel an uncouth delight in discordant music, for the fellow has just struck two cymbals together, and is listening to the sound, while treading with his foot on a kind of Pan's pipes, as an accompaniment: what a clown he is! The space between is occupied by other pictures of Raphael's, a portrait by Titian, a Domenichino, etc., and all these within the circumference of a small semicircle, no larger than one of your own rooms. This is a spot where a

man feels his own insignificance, and may well learn to be humble.

I occasionally walked through the other rooms, where a large picture by Leonardo da Vinci, only commenced and sketched in, with all its wild dashes and strokes, is very suggestive. I was especially struck with the genius of the monk Fra Bartolommeo, who was a man of the most devout, tender, and earnest spirit. There is a small picture of his here, which I discovered for myself. It is about the size of this sheet of paper, in two divisions, and represents the 'Adoration' and the 'Presentation in the Temple.' The figures are about two-thirds of a finger-length in size, but finished in the most exquisite and consummate manner, with the most brilliant colouring, the brightest decorations, and in the most genial sunshine. You can see in the picture itself, that the pious master has taken delight in painting it, and in finishing the most minute details; probably with the view of giving it away, to gratify some friend. It seems as if the painter belonged to it, and still ought to be sitting before his work, or had only this moment left it. I felt the same with regard to many pictures to-day, especially that of the 'Madonna del Cardellino,' which Raphael painted as a wedding-gift, and a surprise for his friend. As I thought of all these great men, so long passed away from earth, whose whole inner soul is still displayed in such lustre to us, and to all the world, I came by chance into the room containing the portraits of great painters. I formerly merely regarded

them in the light of valuable curiosities, for there are more than three hundred portraits, chiefly painted by the masters themselves, so that you see at the same moment the man and his work; but to-day a fresh idea dawned on me with regard to them,—that each painter resembles his own productions, and that each, while painting his own likeness, has been careful to represent himself just as he really was. In this way you become personally acquainted with all these great men, and thus a new light is shed on many things. I will discuss this point more minutely with you when we meet; but I must not omit to say, that Raphael's portrait of himself is almost the most touching picture I have yet seen by him. In the centre of a large rich screen, entirely covered with portraits, hangs a small solitary picture, without any particular designation, but the eye is instantly arrested by it; this is Raphael—youthful, very pale and delicate, and with such onward aspirations, such longing and wistfulness in the mouth and eyes, that it is as if you could see into his very soul. That he cannot succeed in expressing all that he sees and feels, and is thus impelled to go forward, and that he must die an early death—all this is written on his mournful, suffering, yet fervid countenance; and when looking at his dark eyes, which glance at you out of the very depths of his soul, and at the pained and contracted mouth, you cannot resist a feeling of awe.

How I wish you could see the portrait that hangs above it; that of Michael Angelo, an ugly, muscular,

savage, rugged fellow, in all the vigour of life, looking gruff and morose; and on the other side a wise, grave man, with the aspect of a lion, Leonardo da Vinci; but you cannot see this portrait, and I will not describe it in writing, but tell you of it when we meet. Believe me, however, it is truly glorious. Then I passed on to the Niobe, which of all statues makes the greatest impression on me; and back again to my painters, and to the Tribune, and through the Corridors, where the Roman Emperors, with their dignified yet knavish physiognomies, stare you in the face; and last of all I took a final leave of the Medici family.

It was indeed a morning never to be forgotten.

June 26th.

Do not suppose however that I mean to assert that all days are spent thus. You must battle your way through the present living mob, before you can arrive at the nobility, long since dead, and those who have not a strong arm are sure to come badly off in the conflict. Such a journey as mine from Rome to Perugia, and on here, is no joke. Jean Paul says that the presence of a person who openly hates you is most painful and oppressive. Such a being is the Roman *vetturino:* he grants you no sleep; exposes you to hunger and thirst; at night, when he is bound to provide you with your *pranzo,* he contrives that you shall not arrive till midnight, when every one is of course asleep, and you are only too thankful to get a bed. In the morning he sets off at a quarter past three o'clock, and rests his horses at

noon for five hours, but invariably in some solitary little wayside inn, where nothing is to be had. Each day he makes out about six German miles, and drives *piano*, while the sun burns *fortissimo*.

I was very badly off owing to all this, for my fellow-travellers were far from being congenial; three Jesuits inside, and in the cabriolet, where I particularly desired to sit, a most disagreeable Venetian lady. If I wished to escape from her, I was obliged to go inside, and listen to the praises of Charles X., and to hear that Ariosto ought to have been burnt as a corrupt writer, subversive of all morality. It was still worse outside, and we never seemed to get on. The first day, after a journey of four hours, the axletree broke, and we were obliged to remain for nine hours in the same house in the Campagna where we chanced to be, and at last to stay all night. If there was a church on the road that we had an opportunity of visiting, the most beautiful and devotional creations of Perugino, or Giotto, or Cimabue, enchanted our eyes; and so we passed from irritation to delight, and then to irritation again. This was a wretched state to be in. I was not in the least amused by it all; and if Nature had not bestowed on us bright moonshine at the Lake of Thrasymene, and if the scenery had not been so wonderfully fine, and if in every town we had not seen a superb church, and if we had not passed through a large city each day as we journeyed on, and if—but you see I am not easily satisfied.

The route however was beautiful, and I must now describe my arrival in Florence, which also includes my whole Italian life of the previous days. At Incisa, half a day's journey from Florence, my *vetturino* became so intolerable from his insolence and abuse, that I found it necessary to take out my luggage, and to tell him to drive to the devil,—which he accordingly did, rather against his will.

It was Midsummer's day, and a celebrated fête was to take place in Florence the same evening, which I would on no account whatever have missed. This is just the kind of thing that the Italians take advantage of, so the landlady at Incisa offered me a carriage at four times the proper fare. When I refused to take it, she said I might try to procure another; and so I accordingly did, but found there were no carriages for hire except at the Post. I inquired for the Post, and found, to my disgust, that my landlady was the postmistress, and that she had wished to make me pay an exorbitant price for my conveyance. I went back and demanded horses. She said, if I did not choose to pay what she asked, I should have none. I desired to see the regulations, which they are all obliged to have. She said she was not bound to show them, and turned her back on me. The use of physical strength, which plays a great part here, was resorted to by me on this occasion, for I seized her and pushed her back into a room (for we were standing in the passage) and then hurried down the street to the Podestà. It turned

out however that there was no such person in the town, but that he lived four miles off. The affair became every instant more disagreeable, the crowd of boys at my heels increasing at every step. Fortunately a decent-looking man came up, to whom the mob seemed to show some respect; so I accosted him, and explained all that had occurred. He sympathized with me, and took me to a vine-dresser's who had a little carriage for hire.

The whole crowd now congregated before his door, many pressing forward into the house after me, and shouting that I was mad; but the carriage drove up, and I threw a few scudi to an old beggar, on which they all called out that I was a *bravo Signore,* and wished me *buon viaggio.* The moderate price the man demanded more fully showed me the scandalous overcharge of the landlady. The carriage was easy, and the horses went on at a good pace, and so we travelled across the hills to Florence. In the course of half an hour we overtook my lazy vetturino. I put up my umbrella to defend me from the sun, and I scarcely ever travelled so pleasantly and so comfortably as during those few hours, having left all annoyances behind me, and before me the prospect of the beautiful fête.

Very soon the Duomo, and the hundreds of villas scattered through the valleys, were visible. Once more we passed by decorated terraces, and the tops of trees seen over them; the Arno valley looking lovelier than

ever. And so I arrived here in good spirits and dined; and even while doing so I heard a tumult, and looking out of the window I saw crowds, both young and old, all hurrying in their holiday costumes across the bridges.

I followed them to the Corso, and then to the races; afterwards to the illuminated Pergola, and last of all to a masked ball in the Goldoni Theatre. At one o'clock in the morning I went towards home, thinking that the whole affair was over; but the Arno was still covered with gondolas, illuminated by coloured lamps, and crossing each other in every direction. Under the bridge a large ship was passing, hung with green lanterns: the water shone brightly as it rippled along, while a still brighter moon looked down on the whole scene. I recalled to myself the various occurrences of the day, and the thoughts that had chased each other through my mind, and resolved to write them all to you. It is in fact a reminiscence for myself, for it may not be so suggestive to you, but it will one day be of service to me, enabling me to recall various scenes connected with fair Italy.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO FRAU VON PEREIRA, IN VIENNA.

Genoa, July, 1831.

At first I resolved not to answer your letter until I had fulfilled your injunctions, and composed "Napo-

leon's Midnight Review;" and now I have to ask your forgiveness for not having done so, but there is a peculiarity in this matter. I take music in a very serious light, and I consider it quite inadmissible to compose anything that I do not thoroughly feel. It is just as if I were to utter a falsehood; for notes have as distinct a meaning as words, perhaps even a more definite sense. Now it appears to me almost impossible to compose for a descriptive poem. The mass of compositions of this nature do not militate against this opinion, but rather prove its truth; for I am not acquainted with one single work of the kind that has been successful. You are placed between a dramatic conception or a mere narrative; the one, in the "Erl König," causes the willows to rustle, the child to shriek, and the horse to gallop. The other imagines a ballad singer, calmly narrating the horrible tale, as you would a ghost story, and this is the most accurate view of the two; Reichardt almost invariably takes it, but it does not suit me; the music stands in my way. My imagination has far more play when I read such a poem quietly to myself, and imagine the rest, than when it is depicted, or related to me.

The "Midnight Review" cannot be treated as a narrative, inasmuch as no particular person speaks, and the poem is not written in true ballad style. It seems to me more a clever conception than a poem; it strikes me that the poet himself placed no great faith in his misty forms.

I could indeed have composed music for it in the

same descriptive style, as Neukomm and Fischhof, in Vienna. I might have introduced a very novel rolling of drums in the bass, and blasts of trumpets in the treble, and have brought in all sorts of hobgoblins. But I love my serious elements of sound too well to do anything of the sort; for this kind of thing always appears to me a joke: somewhat like the paintings in juvenile spelling-books, where the roofs are coloured bright red, to make the children aware they are intended for roofs; and I should have been most reluctant to write out and send you anything incomplete, or that did not entirely please myself, because I always wish you to have the best I can accomplish.

FELIX.

Milan, July 14th, 1831.

This letter will probably be the last (D.V.) that I shall write to you from an Italian city; I may possibly send you another from the Borromean Islands, which I intend to visit in a few days, but do not rely on this.

My week here has been one of the most agreeable and amusing that I have passed in Italy; and how this could be the case in Milan, where I am such an utter stranger, I shall now proceed to relate. In the first place, I immediately secured a square piano, and attacked with *rabbia* that endless "Walpurgis Night," to finish the thing at last; and to-morrow morning it will be com-

pleted, except the overture; for as yet I have not quite made up my mind whether it shall be a grand symphony, or a short introduction breathing of spring. I should like to take the opinion of some adept on this point. I must say the conclusion has turned out better than I myself expected. The hobgoblins and the bearded Druid, with the trombones sounding behind him, diverted me immensely, and so I passed two forenoons very happily.

'Tasso' also contributed to my pleasure, which I have now for the first time been able to read with facility; it is a splendid poem. I was glad to be already well acquainted with Goethe's 'Tasso;' being constantly reminded of it by the principal passages of the Italian poet, whose verse, like that of Goethe, is so dreamy, harmonious, and tender, its sweet melody delighting the ear. Your favourite passage, dear father, "Era la notte allor," struck me as very beautiful, but the stanzas that I admire most, are those descriptive of Clorinda's death; they are so wonderfully imaginative, and fine. The close however does not quite please me. Tancred's 'Lamentations' are, I think, more charmingly composed than true to nature; they contain too many clever ideas and antitheses; and even the words of the hermit, which soothe him, sound more like a censure on the hermit himself. I should infallibly have killed him on the spot, if he had talked to me in such a strain.

Recently I was reading the episode of 'Armida' in a carriage, surrounded by a company of Italian actors, who

were ncessantly singing Rossini's "Ma trema, trema," when suddenly there recurred to my thoughts Gluck's "Vous m'allez quitter," and Rinaldo's falling asleep, and the voyage in the air—and I felt in a most melting mood. This is genuine music: thus have men felt, and thus have men spoken, and such strains can never die. I do cordially hate the present licentious style. Do not take it amiss; your motto is, Without hatred, no love, —and I did feel so moved when I thought of Gluck, and his grand embodiments.

Every evening I was in society, owing to a mad prank, which however proved very successful. I think I have invented this kind of eccentric proceeding, and may take out a patent for it, as I have always made my most agreeable acquaintances *ex abrupto,* without letters or introductions of any kind.

I asked by chance on my arrival in Milan the name of the Commandant, and, amongst other Generals, the *laquais de place* named General Ertmann. I instantly thought of Beethoven's Sonata in A major, and its dedication: and as I had heard all that was good of Madame Ertmann, from those who knew her; that she was so kind, and had bestowed such loving care on Beethoven, and played herself so beautifully, I, next morning, at a suitable hour for a visit, put on a black coat, desired that the Government-house should be pointed out to me, prepared on the way a grand speech for the General's lady, and went on boldly.

I cannot however deny that I felt rather dismayed

when I was told that the General lived in the first story, facing the street; and when I was fairly in the splendid vaulted hall, I was seized with a sudden panic, and would fain have turned back: but I could not help thinking that it was vastly provincial on my part to take fright at a vaulted hall, so I went straight up to a group of soldiers standing near, and asked an old man in a short nankeen jacket, if General Ertmann lived there, intending then to send in my name to the lady. Unluckily, the man replied, "I am General Ertmann: what is your pleasure?" This was unpleasant, as I was forced to have recourse to the speech I had prepared. The General, however, did not seem particularly edified by my statement, and wished to know whom he had the honour of addressing. This also was far from agreeable, but fortunately he was acquainted with my name, and became very polite: his wife, he said, was not at home, but I should find her at two o'clock, or any hour after that which might suit me.

I was glad that all had gone off so well, and in the meantime went to the Brera, where I passed the time in studying the 'Sposalizio' of Raphael, and at two o'clock I presented myself to Freifrau Dorothea von Ertmann. She received me with much courtesy, and was most obliging, playing me Beethoven's Sonata in C sharp minor, and the one in D minor. The old General, who now appeared in his handsome grey uniform, covered with orders, was quite enchanted, and had tears of delight in his eyes, because it was so long

since he had heard his wife play; he said there was not a person in Milan who cared to hear what I had heard. She mentioned the trio in B major, but said she could not remember it. I played it, and sang the other parts: this enchanted the old couple, and so our acquaintance was quickly established.

Since then their kindness to me is so great that it quite overwhelms me. The old General shows me all the remarkable objects in Milan; in the afternoon his lady takes me in her carriage to drive on the Corso, and at night we have music till one o'clock in the morning. Yesterday at an early hour they drove with me in the environs; at noon I dined with them, and in the evening there was a party. They are the most agreeable and cultivated couple you can imagine, and both as much in love with each other, as if they were a newly wedded pair,—and yet they have been married for four-and-thirty years. Yesterday he spoke of his profession, of military life, of personal courage, and similar subjects, with a degree of lucidity, and liberality of feeling, that I scarcely ever met with, except in my father. The General has been now an officer for six-and-forty years, and you should really see him galloping beside his wife's carriage in the park,—the old gentleman looking so dignified and animated!

She plays Beethoven's works admirably, though it is so long since she studied them; she sometimes rather exaggerates the expression, dwelling too long on one passage, and then hurrying the next; but there are

many parts that she plays splendidly, and I think I have learned something from her. When sometimes she can bring no more tone out of the instrument, and begins to sing in a voice that emanates from the very depths of her soul, she reminds me of you, dear Fanny, though you are of course far superior to her. When I was approaching the end of the adagio in the B major trio, she exclaimed, "The amount of expression here is beyond any one's playing;" and it is quite true of this passage.

The following day, when I went there again to play her the symphony in C minor, she insisted on my taking off my coat, as the day was so hot. In the intervals of our music the General related the most interesting anecdotes of Beethoven, such as that when Madame Ertmann was playing to him in the evening, he not unfrequently used the snuffers as a tooth-pick! She told me that when she lost her last child, Beethoven at first shrank from coming to her house; but at length he invited her to visit him, and when she arrived, she found him seated at the piano, and simply saying, "Let us speak to each other by music," he played on for more than an hour, and, as she expressed it, "he said much to me, and at last gave me consolation." In short I am now in the most genial mood, and quite at my ease, having no occasion to resort to any disguise, or to be silent, for we understand each other admirably on all points. She played the Kreutzer Sonata yesterday with violin accompaniment, and when the violin-player (an Austrian cavalry officer) made a long flourish,

à la Paganini, at the beginning of the adagio, the old General made such a desperate grimace at him, that I nearly fell off my chair from laughing.

I called on Teschner, as you, dear mother, desired me to do so; such a musician however is as depressing as a thick fog. Madame Ertmann has more soul in her little finger than that fellow has in his whole body, with his formidable moustaches, behind which he seems to lie in ambush. There is no public music in Milan; they still speak with enthusiasm of last winter, when Pasta and Rubini sang here, but say that they were miserably supported, and the orchestra and choruses bad. I however heard Pasta six years ago in Paris, and I can do the same every year, with the addition of a good orchestra and a good chorus, and many other advantages; so of course if I wish to hear Italian music, I must go to Paris or to England. The Germans however take it amiss when you say this, and persist *par force* in singing, playing, and acquiring new ideas here, declaring this to be the land of inspiration; while I maintain that inspiration is peculiar to no country, but floats about in the air.

Two days ago I was in the morning theatre here, and was well amused. There you can see more of the life of the people than in any other part of Italy. It is a large theatre with boxes, the pit filled with wooden benches, on which you can find places if you come early; the stage is like every other stage, but there is no roof either over the pit or boxes, so that the bright

sun shines into the theatre and into the eyes of the actors. Moreover the piece they gave was in the Milanese dialect. You feel as if you were secretly watching all these complicated and diverting situations, and might take part in them if necessary, and thus the most familiar comic dilemmas become novel and interesting; and the public seem to feel the most lively interest in them. And now, good night. I wished to talk to you a little before going to bed, and so it has become a letter.

FELIX.

EXTRACTS FROM TWO LETTERS TO EDWARD DEVRIENT.

Milan, July 15th, 1831.

You reproach me with being two-and-twenty without having yet acquired fame. To this I can only reply, had it been the will of Providence that I should be renowned at the age of two-and-twenty, I no doubt should have been so. I cannot help it, for I no more write to gain a name, than to obtain a Kapellmeister's place. It would be a good thing if I could secure both. But so long as I do not actually starve, so long is it my duty to write only as I feel, and according to what is in my heart, and to leave the results to *Him* who disposes of other and greater matters. Every day, however, I am more sincerely anxious to write exactly

as I feel, and to have even less regard than ever to external views; and when I have composed a piece just as it sprang from my heart, then I have done my duty towards it; and whether it brings hereafter fame, honour, decorations, or snuff-boxes, etc., is a matter of indifference to me. If you mean, however, that I have neglected, or delayed perfecting myself, or my compositions, then I beg you will distinctly and clearly say in what respect and wherein I have done so. This would be indeed a serious reproach.

You wish me to write operas only, and think I am unwise not to have done so long ago. I answer, place a fit libretto in my hand, and in two months the work shall be completed, for every day I long more and more to write an opera. I think that it might become something fresh and spirited, if I had a subject; but I have got no words yet, and I assuredly never will write music for any poetry that does not inspire me with enthusiasm. If you know a man capable of writing the libretto of an opera, for Heaven's sake tell me his name, I ask no more! But till I have the words, is it not better I should try nothing,—even were it possible for me to do otherwise?

I have recently written a good deal of sacred music; because this is quite as much a necessity to me, as the impulse that often induces people to study some particular book, the Bible, or others, as the only reading they care for at the time. If it bears any resemblance to Sebastian Bach, it is again no fault of mine, for I

wrote it just according to the mood I was in; and if the words inspired me with a mood akin to that of old Bach, I shall value it all the more, for I am sure you do not think that I would merely copy his form, without the substance; if it were so, I should feel such disgust and such a void, that I could never again finish a composition. Since then I have written a grand piece of music which will probably impress the public at large—the first "Walpurgis Night" of Goethe. I began it simply because it pleased and interested me, and never dreamt of its performance; but now that it lies finished before me, I see that it is quite suitable for a great *concert-stück*, and you must sing the Bearded Pagan Priest at my first subscription concert in Berlin. I took the liberty of composing his part expressly to suit your voice, it is therefore essential that you should sing it; and as I have hitherto found that the pieces I have composed with least reference to the public, are precisely those which gave them the greatest satisfaction, so no doubt it will be on this occasion also. I only mention this to prove to you that I do not neglect *the practical.* To be sure this is invariably an afterthought, for who the deuce could write music, the most unpractical thing in the world—the very reason why I love it so dearly—and yet think all the time of the practical! It is just as if a lover were to bring a declaration of love to his mistress in rhyme and verse, and recite it to her.

I am now going to Munich, where they have offered

me an opera, to see if I can find anything like a poet there, for I will only have a man who has a certain portion of fire and genius. I do not expect a giant, and if I fail in meeting with a poet there, I shall probably make Immermann's acquaintance for this express purpose, and if he fail to prove the right man, I shall seek him in London. I always fancy that the right man has not yet appeared; but what can I do to find him out? He certainly does not live in the Reichmann Hotel, nor next-door; so where does he live? Pray write to me on this subject; although I firmly believe that a kind Providence, who sends us all things in due time when we stand in need of them, will supply this also if necessary; still we must do our parts, and look round us—and I do wish the libretto were found.

In the meantime I write as good music as I can, and hope to make progress, and we already agreed, when discussing this affair in my room, that, as I said before, I am not responsible for the rest. But enough now of this dry tone. I really have become once more almost morose and impatient, and yet I had so firmly resolved never again to be so!

Lucerne, August 27th, 1831.

I quite feel that any opera I were to write now, would not be nearly so good as any second one I might compose afterwards; and that I must first enter on the new

path I propose to myself, and pursue it for some little time, in order to discover whither it will lead, and how far it will go, whereas in instrumental music I already begin to know exactly what my aims should be. Having worked so much in this sphere, I feel much more clear and tranquil with regard to it,—in short, it urges me onwards. Besides, I have been made very humble lately, by a chance occurrence that still dwells on my mind.

In the valley of Engelberg I found Schiller's 'Wilhelm Tell,' and on reading it over again, I was anew enchanted and fascinated by such a glorious work of art, and by all the passion, fire, and fervour it displays. An expression of Goethe's suddenly recurred to my mind. In the course of a long conversation about Schiller, he said that Schiller had been able to *supply* two great tragedies every year, besides other poems. This business-like term *supply*, struck me as the more remarkable on reading this fresh, vigorous work; and such energy seemed to me so wonderfully grand. that I felt as if in the course of my life I had never yet produced anything of importance; all my works seem so isolated. I feel as if I too must one day *supply* something. Pray do not think this presumptuous; but rather believe that I only say so because I know what *ought* to be, and what *is not*. Where I am to find the opportunity, or even a glimpse of one, is hitherto to me quite a mystery. If however it be my mission, I firmly believe that the opportunity will be granted, and if I do not profit by it another will; but in that case I cannot divine

why I feel such an impulse to press onwards. If you could succeed in not thinking about singers, decorations, and situations, but feel solely absorbed in representing men, nature, and life, I am convinced that you would yourself write the best libretto of any one living; for a person who is so familiar with the stage as you are, could not possibly write anything undramatic, and I really do not know what you could wish to change in your poetry. If there be an innate feeling for nature and melody, the verses cannot fail to be musical, even though they sound rather lame in the libretto; but so far as I am concerned, you may write prose if you like, I will compose music for it. But when one form is to be moulded into another, when the verses are to be musically framed, but not musically *felt*, when fine words are to replace outwardly what is utterly deficient in fine feeling inwardly—there you are right—this is a dilemma from which no man can extricate himself; for as surely as pure metre, happy thoughts, and classical language do not suffice to make a good poem, unless a certain flash of poetical inspiration pervades the whole, so an opera can only become thoroughly musical, and accordingly thoroughly dramatic, by a vivid feeling of life in all the characters.

There is a passage on this subject in Beaumarchais, who is censured because he makes his personages utter too few fine thoughts, and has put too few poetical phrases into their mouths. He answers, that this is not his fault. He must confess that during the whole time

he was writing the piece, he was engaged in the most lively conversation with his *dramatis personæ:* that while seated at his writing table he was exclaiming, "Figaro, prends garde, le Comte sait tout!—Ah! Comtesse, quelle imprudence!—vite, sauve-toi, petit page:" and then he wrote down their answers, whatever they chanced to be,—nothing more. This strikes me as being both true and charming.

The sketch of an opera introducing an Italian Carnival, and the close in Switzerland, I already knew, but was not aware that it was yours. Pray represent Switzerland with unlimited life and vigour. If you depict an effeminate Switzerland, with *jodeln* and languishing, such as I saw here in the theatre last night in the 'Swiss Family,' when the very mountains and Alpine horns became sentimental, I shall lose all patience, and criticize you severely in Spener's paper. Pray make it very spirited, and write to me again on the subject.

To his Family.

Isola Bella, July 24th, 1831.

You no doubt imagine that you inhale the fragrance of orange flowers, see blue sky, and a bright sun, and a clear lake, when you merely read the date of this letter. Not at all! The weather is atrocious, it rains like mad, and thunders at times into the bargain;—the hills look frightfully bleak, as if the world were coffined

in clouds; the lake is grey, the sky is sombre. I can smell no orange-flowers, and this island might quite as appropriately be called "Isola Brutta!" and this has gone on for three days! My unfortunate cloak! I am confessedly the "spirit of contradiction" (I refer to my mother), and as it is at present the fashion with every one to pronounce the Borromean Islands "by no means so beautiful," and somewhat formal; and as the weather seems resolved to disgust me with this spot,—from a spirit of opposition I maintain that it is perfectly lovely. The approach to this island, where you see green terraces with quaint statues, and antiquated decorations, contrasted with fresh foliage, and every species of southern vegetation crowded together, has a peculiar charm for me, and yet something affecting and solemn too. For what I last year saw everywhere in all the luxuriance and exuberance of wild nature, and to which my eye had become so accustomed, I now find cultivated by art, and about to pass away from me for ever. There are citron-hedges and orange-bushes; and sharp-pointed aloes shoot up from the walls—it is just as if, at the end of a piece, the beginning were to be repeated; and this, as you know, I particularly like.

Moreover in the steamboat was the first peasant girl I have seen here in Swiss costume; the people speak a bad half-French Italian, and this is my last letter from Italy. But believe me the Italian lakes are not the least interesting objects in this country; *anzi*,—I never saw any more beautiful. People had tried to persuade me

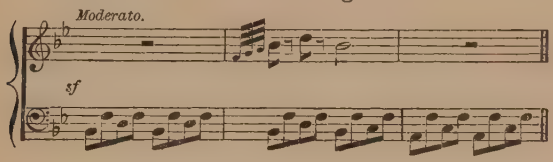
that the gigantic forms of the Swiss Alps that have haunted me from my childhood* had been exaggerated by my imagination, and that after all a snowy mountain was not in reality so grand as I thought. I almost dreaded being undeceived, but at first sight of the foreground of the Alps from the Lake of Como, veiled in clouds, with here and there a surface of bright snow, sharp black points rearing their heads, and sinking precipitously into the lake, the hills as they rose first scattered over with trees and villages, then covered with moss, and then bleak and desolate, full of snowy clefts, —I felt just as I formerly did, and saw that I had exaggerated nothing.

In the Alps all is more free, more sharply defined; more uncouth, if you will; yet I always feel there both healthier and happier I have just returned from the gardens of the Palace, which I visited in the midst of the rain. I wished to imitate Albano,† and sent for a barber to open a vein: he however misunderstood my purpose, and shaved me instead,—a very pardonable mistake. Gondolas are landing on every part of the island, for to-day is the fête following the great festival of yesterday, in honour of which the P. P. Borromeo sent for singers and musicians from Milan, to sing and play to the islanders. The gardener asked me if I knew what a wind instrument was. I said with a clear conscience that I did; and he replied that I ought to try to

* The whole family had been in Switzerland in the year 1821.

† In the 'Titian' of Jean Paul.

imagine the effect of thirty such instruments, and violins and basses, all played at once; but indeed I could not possibly imagine it, for it must be heard to be believed. The sounds (continued he) seemed to come from Heaven, and all this was produced by *phil-harmony*. What he meant by this term I know not; but the music had evidently made more impression on him, than the best orchestra on many a connoisseur. At this moment some one has just begun to play the organ in the church for Divine service, in the following strain:—



Full organ in the bass, 16 ft. Bourdon, and reed stops! a precious effect! The fellow has come all the way from Milan, too, expressly to make this disturbance in the church. I must go there for a little, so farewell for a few moments. I intend to remain here for the night, instead of crossing the lake again, for I am so much pleased with this little island. I certainly cannot say that I have slept soundly for the last two nights; one night owing to the innumerable claps of thunder, the next owing to the innumerable fleas: and, in all probability, I have to-night the prospect of both combined. But as the following morning I shall be speaking French, and have left Italy, and crossed the Simplon, I mean to ramble about all this day and to-morrow in true Italian fashion.

I must now relate to you historically how I happened to come here. At the very last moment of my stay in Milan, the Ertmanns came to my room to bid me farewell, and we took leave of each other more cordially than I have done of any one for many a long day. I promised to send you many kind wishes from them, though they are unacquainted with you, and I also agreed to write to them occasionally. Another valued acquaintance I made there, is Herr Mozart, who holds an office in Milan; but he is a musician, heart and soul. He is said to bear the strongest resemblance to his father, especially in disposition; for the very same phrases that affect the feelings in his father's letters, from their candour and simplicity, constantly recur in the conversation of the son, whom no one can fail to love from the moment he is known. For instance, I consider it a very charming trait in him, that he is as jealous of the fame and name of his father, as if he were a young musician commencing his career; and one evening, at the Ertmanns', when a great many of Beethoven's works had been played, the Baroness asked me in a whisper to play something of Mozart's, otherwise his son would enjoy himself less than usual; so when I played the overture to "Don Juan," he began to thaw, and begged me to play also the overture to the "Flauto Magico" of his "*Vatter*," and seemed to feel a truly childlike delight in hearing it: it is impossible not to like him.

He gave me letters to some friends near the Lake

of Como, which procured me for once a glimpse of Italian provincial life, and I amused myself famously there for a few days with the Doctor, the Apothecary, the Judge, and other people of the locality. There were very lively discussions on the subject of Sand, and many expressed great admiration of him; this appeared strange to me, as the occurrence is of such distant date that no one any longer argues on the subject. They also spoke of Shakspeare's plays, which are now being translated into Italian. The Doctor said that the tragedies were good, but that there were some plays about witches that were too stupid and childish; one in particular, "Il Sonno d'una Notte di Mezza State." In it the stale device occurred of a piece being rehearsed in the play, and it was full of anachronisms and childish ideas; on which they all chimed in that it was very silly, and advised me on no account to read it.* I remained meekly silent, and attempted no defence! I bathed frequently in the Lake, and sketched, and yesterday rowed on the Lake of Lugano, which frowned sternly on us with its cascades and dark canopy of clouds; then across the hills to Luvino, and to-day I came here by steam.

Evening.—I have this moment returned from the Isola Madre, and most splendid it is; spacious, and full of terraces, citron-hedges, and evergreen shrubs. The weather has at last become a little respectable, so the

* The overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" was composed by Mendelssohn as early as the year 1826.

large white house on the island, with its ruins and terraces, looked very pretty. It is indeed a unique land, and I only wish I could bring to Berlin for you a mouthful of the same balmy air that I inhaled when in the boat to-day. You have nothing like it, and I would rather you enjoyed it, than all the people who imbibe it here. A fiercely moustachioed German was with me in the boat, who examined all the beautiful scenery as if he were about to purchase it and thought it too dear. Presently I heard a trait, quite in the style of Jean Paul. When we were walking on the island, surrounded by verdure, an Italian, who was of the party, observed that this was a spot for lovers to ramble in and to enjoy the charms of nature. "Ah! yes!" said I in a languishing tone. "It was on this account," continued he, "that I separated from my wife ten years ago; I established her at Venice in a small tobacconist's shop, and now I live as I please. You must one day do the same!"

The old boatman told us that he had rowed General Bonaparte on this lake, and related various anecdotes of him and Murat. He said Murat was a most extraordinary man; all the time that he was rowing him on the lake, he never ceased singing to himself for a single moment, and once on the journey he gave him his spirit-flask, and said he would buy another for himself in Milan. I cannot tell why these little traits, especially the singing, seemed to realize the man in my mind more than many a book of history.

The "Walpurgis Night" is finished and revised, and the overture will soon be equally far advanced. The only person who has heard it as yet, is Mozart, and he was so delighted with it that the well-known composition caused me fresh pleasure; he insisted on my publishing it immediately. Pray forgive this letter, in the genuine student style. You no doubt perceive from its style that I have not worn a neckcloth for a week past; but I wished you to know how gay and happy I have been during the days spent among the mountains, and with what pleasure I look forward to those that yet await me.—Yours,

FELIX.

A l'Union-prieuré de Chamouni, end of July, 1831.

My dear Parents,

I cannot refrain from writing to you from time to time, to thank you for my wondrously beautiful journey; and if I have done so before, I must do so again now, for more delightful days than those on my journey hither, and during my stay here, I never experienced. Fortunately you already know this valley, so there is no occasion for me to describe it to you; indeed, how could I possibly have done so? But this I may say, that nowhere has nature in all her glory met my eyes in such brightness as here, both when I saw it with you for the first time and now; and as every one who

sees it, ought to thank God for having given him faculties to comprehend, and to appreciate such grandeur, so I must also thank you for having procured me such a pleasure.

I had been told that I exaggerated the forms of the mountains in my imagination; but yesterday, at the hour of sunset, I was pacing up and down in front of the house, and each time that I turned my back on the mountains, I endeavoured vividly to represent to myself these gigantic masses, and each time when I again faced them, they far exceeded my previous conceptions. As on the morning that we drove away from this when the sun was rising* (no doubt you remember it) the hills have been clear and lovely ever since I arrived. The snow pure, and sharply defined, and apparently near in the dark blue atmosphere; the glaciers thundering unremittingly, as the ice is melting: the gathering clouds lying lightly on the base of the mountains, whose summits stand forth clear above. Would that we could see them together! I have passed this whole day here quietly, and entirely alone. I wished to sketch the outlines of the mountains, so I went out and found an admirable point of view, but when I opened my book, the paper seemed so very small that I hesitated about attempting it. I have indeed succeeded in giving the outlines what is called *correctly*,—but every stroke looks so formal, when compared with the grace and freedom which everywhere here pervade

* In the year 1821.

nature. And then the splendour of colour! In short, this is the most brilliant point of my travels; and the whole of my excursion on foot, so solitary, independent, and enjoyable, is something new to me, and a hitherto unknown pleasure.

I must however relate how I came here, otherwise my letter at last will contain nothing but notes of admiration. As I previously wrote to you, I had the most odious weather on the Lago Maggiore, and the Islands. It continued so incessantly stormy, cold, and wet, that I took my place rather sulkily in the Diligence, and we drove on towards the Simplon. Scarcely had we been journeying for half an hour, when the moon came out, the clouds dispersed, and next morning the weather was most bright and beautiful. I felt almost ashamed of this undeserved good fortune, and I could now thoroughly enjoy the glorious scenery; the road winding first through high green valleys, then through rocky ravines and meadows, and at last past glaciers and snowy mountains. I had with me a little French book on the subject of the Simplon road, which both pleased and affected me; for the subject was Napoleon's correspondence with the Directory about the projected work, and the first report of the General who crossed the mountain. With what spirit and vigour these letters are written! and yet a little swagger too, but with such a glow of enthusiasm that it quite stirred me, as I was driven along this capital level road by an Austrian postilion. I compared the fire and poetry displayed in every description

contained in the letter (I mean that of the subaltern General,) with the eloquence of the present day, which leaves you so terribly cold and is so odiously prosaic in all its philanthropic views, and so lame—in which there is plenty of *fanfaronnade,* but no genuine youth—and I could not but feel that a great epoch has passed away for ever. I was unable to divest myself of the idea that Napoleon never saw this work—one of his favourite conceptions—for he never crossed the Simplon when the road was finished, and was thus deprived of this great gratification. High up, in the Simplon village, all is bleak, and I actually shivered from cold for the first time during the last year and a half. A nice civil Frenchwoman keeps the inn on the summit, and it would not be easy to describe the sensation of satisfaction caused by this thrifty cleanliness, which is nowhere to be found in Italy.

We then descended into the Valais, as far as Brieg, where I stayed all night, overjoyed to find myself once more among honest, natural, German-speaking people, —who plundered me however in the most infamous manner. The following day I drove through the Valais —an enchanting journey: the road all along, like those you have seen in Switzerland, ran between two lofty ranges of mountains, their snowy peaks starting up at intervals, and through avenues of green, leafy walnut-trees, standing in front of pretty brown houses,—below, the wild grey Rhone,—past Leuk, and every quarter of an hour a village with a little church. From Martigny

I travelled for the first time in my life literally on foot, and as I found the guides too dear I went on quite alone and started with my cloak and knapsack on my shoulders. After a couple of hours I met a stout peasant lad, who became my guide, and also carried my knapsack; and so we went on past Forclas to Trient, a little dairy village, where I breakfasted on milk and honey, and thence to the Col de Balme.

The whole valley of Chamouni, and Mont Blanc, with all its precipitous glaciers, lay before me bathed in sunshine. A party of gentlemen and ladies (one of the latter very pretty and young) came from the opposite side on mules, with a number of guides; scarcely had we all assembled under one roof, when subtle vapours began to rise, shrouding first the mountain and then the valley, and at last thickly covering every object, so that soon nothing was to be seen. The ladies were afraid of entering the fog, just as if they were not already in the midst of it; at last they set off, and from the window I watched the singular spectacle of the caravan leaving the house, all laughing, and talking loudly in French and English and *patois*. The voices presently became indistinct; then the figures likewise; and last of all I saw the pretty girl in her wide plaid cloak; then only glimpses of grey shadows at intervals, and they were gone. A few minutes later I ran down the opposite side of the mountain with my guide; we soon emerged once more into sunshine, and entered the green valley of Chamouni with its glaciers; and at

length arrived here at the Union. I have just returned from a ramble to Montanvert, the Mer de Glace, and to the source of the Aveiron. You know this splendid scenery, and so you will forgive me, if, instead of going to Geneva to-morrow, I first make the tour of Mont Blanc, that I may become acquainted with this personage from the Southern side also, which is I hear the most striking. Farewell, dear parents! May we have a happy meeting!—Yours,

FELIX.

Charney, August 6th, 1831.

My dear Sisters,

You have, I know, read Ritter's 'Afrika' from beginning to end, but still I do not think you know where Charney is situated, so fetch out Keller's old travelling map, that you may be able to accompany me on my wanderings. Trace with your finger a line from Vevay to Clarens, and follow a stroke which goes towards the Dent de Jaman; this stroke represents a footpath; and where you go by finger I have gone on foot this morning—for it is now only half-past seven, and I am still fasting. I mean to breakfast here, and am writing to you in a neat wooden room, waiting till the milk is warm; without, I have a view of the bright blue lake; and so I now begin my journal, and mean to continue it as I best can during my pedestrian tour.

After breakfast.—Heavens! here is a pretty business.

My landlady has just told me with a long face, that there is not a creature in the village to show me the way across the Dent, or to carry my knapsack, except a young girl; the men being all at work. I usually set off every morning very early and quite alone, with my bundle on my shoulders, because I find the guides from the inns both too expensive and too tiresome; a couple of hours later I hire the first honest-looking lad I see, and so I travel famously on foot. I need not say how enchanting the lake and the road hither were; you must recall for yourself all the beauties you once enjoyed there. The foot-path is in continued shade, under walnut-trees and up hill,—past villas and castles, —along the lake which glitters through the foliage; villages everywhere, and brooks and streams rushing along from every nook, in every village; then the neat tidy houses,—it is all quite too charming, and you feel so fresh and so free. Here comes the girl with her steeple hat. I can tell you that she is vastly pretty into the bargain, and her name is Pauline; she has just packed my things into her wicker basket. Adieu!

Evening, Château d'Oex, candle-light.

I have had the most delightful journey. What would I not give to procure you such a day! But then you must first become two youths and be able to climb actively, and drink milk when the opportunity offers, and treat with contempt the intense heat, the many rocks in the way, the many holes in the path, ay,

the many holes in your boots, and I fear you are rather too dainty for this; but it was most lovely! I shall never forget my journey with Pauline; she is one of the nicest girls I ever met, so pretty and healthy-looking, and naturally intelligent; she told me anecdotes about her village, and I in return told her about Italy; but I know who was the most amused.

The previous Sunday, all the young people of *distinction* in her village had gone to a place far across the mountain, to dance there in the afternoon. They set off shortly after midnight, arrived while it was still dark, lighted a large fire and made coffee. Towards morning the men had leaping matches before the ladies (we passed a broken hedge testifying to the truth of this); then they danced, and were at home again by Sunday evening, and early on Monday morning they all resumed their labours in the vineyards. By Heavens, I felt a strong inclination to become a Vaudois peasant, while I was listening to Pauline, when from above she pointed out to me the villages where they dance when the cherries are ripe, and others where they dance when the cows go to pasture, and the dairy season begins. To-morrow they are to dance in St. Gingoulph; they row across the lake, and any one who can play takes his instrument with him; but Pauline is not to be of the party because her mother will not allow it, from dread of the wide lake, and many other girls also do not go for the same reason, as they all cling together.

She then asked my leave to say good-day to a cousin of hers, and ran down to a neat cottage in the meadow; soon the two girls came out together and sat on a bench and chattered; on the Col de Jaman above, I saw her relations busily mowing, and herding the cows.

What cries and shouts ensued! Then those above began to play the bagpipes, on which they all laughed. I did not understand one syllable of their *patois,* except the beginning, which was, Adieu Pierrot! All these sounds were taken up by a merry mad echo, that piped and laughed and shouted too. Towards noon we arrived at Allière. When I had rested for a time, I once more shouldered my knapsack, for a fat old man provoked me by offering to carry it for me; then Pauline and I shook hands, and we took leave of each other. I descended into the meadows, and if Pauline has bored or failed to please you, the fault lies in my description, for the reality was charming; and so was my further journey. I came to a cherry-tree, where the people were gathering the fruit, so I lay down on the grass and ate cherries for a time along with them. I took my mid-day rest at Latine, in a clean wooden house. The carpenter who built it gave me his company to some roast lamb, and pointed out to me with pride every table, and press, and chair.

At length, this evening, I arrived here, through dazzling green meadows, interspersed with houses, surrounded by fir-trees and rivulets: the church here stands on a velvet green knoll; more houses in the dis-

tance, and still further away, huts and rocks; and in a ravine, patches of snow still lying on the plain. It is one of those idyllic spots such as we have seen together in Wattwyll, but the village smaller and the mountains more open and green. I must conclude however to-day by a high eulogy on the Canton de Vaud. Of all the countries I know this is the most beautiful, and it is the spot where I should most like to live when I become really old. The people are so contented, and look so well, and the country also. Coming from Italy it is quite touching to see the honesty that still exists in the world,—the happy faces, the total absence of beggars, or saucy officials: in short, the complete contrast between the two nations. I thank God for having created so much that is beautiful; and may it be His gracious will to permit us all, whether in Berlin, England, or in the Château d'Oex, to enjoy a happy evening and a tranquil night!

Boltigen, August 7th, evening.

The lightning and thunder are terrific outside, and torrents of rain besides; in the mountains you first learn respect for weather. I have not gone further, for it would have been such a pity to traverse the lovely Simmen valley under an umbrella. It was a grey morning, but delightfully cool for walking in the forenoon. The valley at Saanen, and the whole road, is

incredibly fresh and enlivening. I am never weary of looking at the verdure. I do believe that if I were gazing all my life at undulating verdant meadows, dotted over with reddish-brown houses, I should always experience the same pleasure in looking at them. The road winds the whole way through meadows of this kind, and past running streams.

At noon I dined at Zweisimmen, in one of those enormous Bernese houses, where everything glitters with neatness and cleanliness, and where even the smallest detail is carefully attended to. I there dispatched my knapsack by the diligence to Interlachen, and am now about to walk as a regular pedestrian through the country; a shirt in my pocket, a brush and comb, and my sketch-book, this is all I require; but I am very tired. May the weather be fine to-morrow!

Wimmis, the 8th.

A pretty affair! the weather is three times as bad as ever. I must give up my plan of going to Interlachen to-day, as there is no possibility of getting on. For the last few hours the water has been pouring straight down, as if the clouds above were being fairly squeezed out; the roads are as soft as feather beds; only occasional shreds of the mountains are to be seen, and even these but rarely. I almost thought sometimes that I was in the Margravate of Brandenburg, and the Simmen valley looked perfectly flat. I was obliged to button my waistcoat tight over my sketch-book, for

very soon my umbrella was of no use whatever, and so I arrived here to dinner about one o'clock. This is where I had my breakfast.

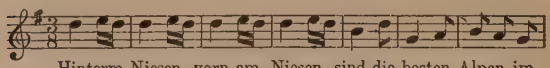
WEISSENBURG, *August* 8.

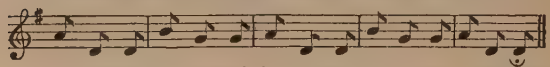
I sketched this on the spot with a pen, so do not laugh at my treatment of the water. I passed the night very uncomfortably at Boltigen. There was no room in the inn, owing to a fair, so I was obliged to lodge in

an adjacent house, where there were swarms of vermin quite as bad as in Italy, a creaking house clock, striking hoarsely every hour, and a baby that screeched the whole night. I really could not help for a time noticing the child's cries, for it screamed in every possible key, expressive of every possible emotion; first angry, then furious, then whining, and when it could screech no longer, it grunted in a deep bass. Let no one tell me that we must wish to return to the days of our childhood, because children are so happy. I am convinced that such a little creature as this, flies into a rage just as we do, and has also his sleepless nights, and his passions, and so forth.

This philosophical view occurred to me this morning, while I was sketching Weissenburg, and so I wished to communicate it to you on the spot; but I took up the 'Constitutionnel,' in which I read that Casimir Périer wishes to resign, and many other things that furnish matter for reflection; among others a most remarkable article on the cholera, which I should like to transcribe, for it is so extraordinary. The existence of this disease is totally and absolutely denied; only one person had it in Dantzic,—a Jew,—and he got well. Then followed a number of "Hegelisms" in French, and the election of the deputies—oh world!—As soon as I had finished reading the paper, I was obliged to set off again in the rain through the meadows. No such enchanting country as this is to be seen, even in a dream; in the worst weather, the little churches, and the numerous

houses, and shrubs, and rills are still truly lovely. The verdure to-day was quite in its element. Dinner has been long over, and it is still pouring. I intend to go no further than Spiez this evening. I regret much that I can neither see this place, which seems beautifully situated, nor Spiez, which I know from Rösel's sketches. This is, in fact, the gem of the whole Simmen valley, and thence the old song says :—





I sang this the whole day while walking along. The Siebethal, however, showed no gratitude for the compliment, and the rain continued unremittingly.

Wyler, evening.

They could not take me in at Spiez, for there is no inn there where you can lodge, so I was obliged to return here. I very much admired the situation of Spiez; it is built on a rock, which projects into the lake, with numbers of turrets, and gables, and peaks. There I saw a manor-house, with an orangery; a sulky-looking nobleman with two sporting dogs at his heels; a little church, and terraces with bright flowers. It was all very lovely. To-morrow I shall see it from the other side, if the weather permits. To-day it has rained for three hours consecutively, and I was well soaked on

the way here. The mountain streams are superb in such weather, for they leap and rage furiously. I crossed one of these demons, the Kander, which seemed to have taken leave of its senses, leaping and blustering, and foaming; the water looked quite brown, and scattered its yellow spray in all directions. A black peak of the mountains was here and there visible through the rain-laden clouds, which hung deeper into the valley than I ever before saw them. Yet the day was most enjoyable.

Wyler, the 9th, morning.

To-day the weather is worse than ever. It has rained the whole night through, and this morning too it is pouring. I have however intimated that I shall not set out in such weather, and if it continues I shall write to you again to-night from Wyler. In the meantime I have an opportunity of making acquaintance with the Swiss hosts. They are very primitive. I could not get on my shoes, because they had shrunk, owing to the rain. The landlady asked if I wished to have a shoehorn; and as I said I did, she brought me a tablespoon; but it answered the purpose. And moreover they are eager politicians. Over my bed hangs a horrible distorted face, under which is written, "Brinz Baniadofsgi."* If he had not a kind of Polish costume, it would be difficult to discover whether it is intended for a man or a woman, for neither the portrait itself nor the inscription throws much light on the subject.

* Prince Poniatowski.

Evening, at Untersee.

All jesting is turned into sad earnest, which in these days may easily be the case. The storm has raged furiously, and caused great damage and devastation; the people here say that they remember no more violent storm and rain for many years; and they rush on with such incredible rapidity. This morning early the weather was merely wet and disagreeable, and yet this afternoon all the bridges are swept away, and every passage instantaneously blocked up. There have been landslips at the Lake of Brienz, and everything is in an uproar.

I have just heard here that war has been proclaimed in Europe; so the world certainly bears a wild, bleak aspect at this time, and I ought to feel thankful, that at all events, for the present, I have a warm room here, and a comfortable roof over my head. The rain ceased for a time early this morning, and I thought that the clouds were fairly exhausted; so I left Wyler, but soon found that the roads were sadly cut up; but worse was to come; the rain began again gently, but about nine o'clock came down so violently, and with such suddenness, that it was evident something strange was brewing. I crept into a half-built hut, where a great mass of fodder was lying, and nestled comfortably among the fragrant hay. A soldier of the Canton, on his way to Thun, also crept in from the other side, and in the course of an hour, as the weather did not improve, we went on our different paths.

I was obliged to take shelter again at Leisingen, and

waited there a long time; but as my luggage was at Interlachen, a distance of only two hours from thence, I thought that I would set the weather at defiance; so about one o'clock I set out for Interlachen. There was literally nothing to be seen but the grey surface of the lake,—no mountains, and seldom even the outlines of the opposite shore. The little springs, which as you may remember often run along by the foot-paths, had swollen into streams, through which I was obliged to wade; and where the road was hilly, the waters accumulated in the hollows and formed a pool, so I was forced to jump over dripping hedges, into marshy meadows; the small blocks of wood—by means of which brooks are crossed here—lay under the water; at one moment I found myself between two of these brooks, which had run into each other, and for a considerable time I was obliged to walk against the current, above my ankles in water. All the streams are black, or chocolate-brown, looking like earth flowing along. Torrents poured down from above; the wind shook down the water from the dripping walnut-trees; the waterfalls which tumble into the lake, thundered frightfully from both shores. You could trace the couse of the brown muddy streaks, rushing along through the pure waters of the lake, which, in the midst of all this uproar, remained perfectly tranquil, its surface scarcely ruffled, quietly receiving all the blustering streams that poured into its bosom.

A man met me, who had taken off his shoes and stockings, and turned up his trowsers. This made me feel

rather nervous. Presently I met two women, who said that I could not go through the village, for all the bridges were gone. I asked how far it was to Interlachen. "A good hour," they said. I could not make up my mind to turn back, so I went on towards the village, where the people shouted to me from the windows that I could go no further, because the waters were rushing down so impetuously from the mountains; and certainly there was a fine commotion in the middle of the village. The muddy stream had swept everything along with it, eddying round the houses, and running along the meadows and footpaths, and finally thundering down into the lake. Luckily there was a little boat there, in which I was ferried across to Neuhaus, though this expedition in an open boat, in torrents of rain, was far from pleasant. My condition, when I arrived at Neuhaus, was miserable enough; I looked as if I wore long black boots over my light-coloured trousers, my shoes and stockings quite up to my knees, dark brown; then came the original white, then a soaked blue paletot; even my sketch-book, that I had buttoned under my waistcoat, was wet through.

I arrived in this plight at Interlachen, where I was very ill received, for the people there either could not or would not find room for me, and so I was forced to return to Untersee, where I am famously lodged, and most comfortable. Singularly enough, I had been all along anticipating with such pleasure revisiting the inn at Interlachen, of which I had so many reminiscences,

and I drove up in my little Neuhaus carriage to the Nussbaum Platz, and saw the well-known glass gallery; the pretty landlady, too, came to the door, but somewhat aged and altered. Neither the dreadful storms, nor the various discomforts I had endured, annoyed me half so much as not being able to remain at Interlachen, consequently for the first time since I left Vevay I was out of humour for half an hour, and obliged to sing Beethoven's adagio in A flat major, three or four times over,

before I could recover my equanimity. I learned here for the first time, the damage the storm had already done, and may yet do, for the rain is still incessant.

Half-past Nine o'clock at Night.—The bridge at Zweilütschenen is carried away; the *vetturini* from Brienz, and Grindelwald, will not encounter the risk of driving home, from the fear of some rock falling on their heads. The water here has risen to within a foot and a half of the Aar bridge; the gloom of the sky I cannot describe. I mean to wait here patiently; besides, I require no extraneous aids to enable me to summon up my reminiscences. They have given me a room where there is a piano; it indeed bears the date of the year 1794, and somewhat resembles in tone the little old "Silbermann" in my room at home, so I took a fancy to it at the very first chord I struck, and it also recalls you to my mind. This piano has out-

lived many things, and probably never dreamt that I was likely to compose by its aid, as I was not born till 1809, now fully two-and-twenty years ago; in the meantime, the piano, though seven-and-thirty years old, has plenty of good material in it yet.

I have some new "Lieder" in hand, dear sisters. You have not seen my favourite one in E major, "Auf der Reise,"—it is very sentimental. I am now composing one which will not, I fear, be very good; but it will, at all events, please us three, for it is at least well intended. The words are Goethe's, but I don't say what they are; it is very daring in me to compose for this poetry, and the words are by no means suitable for music, but I thought them so divinely beautiful, that I could not resist singing them to myself. Enough for to-day; so good night, dear ones.

August 10th.

The weather this morning is clear and bright, and the storm has passed away; would that all storms ended as quickly, and were as soon allayed! I have passed a glorious day, sketching, composing, and inhaling fresh air. In the afternoon I went on horseback to Interlachen, for no man can go there on foot at this moment. The whole road is flooded, so that even on horseback I got very wet. In this place, too, every street is inundated and impassable. How beautiful Interlachen is! How humble and insignificant we feel when we see how splendid the good Lord has made this world; and nowhere can you see it in greater

magnificence than here. I sketched for my father one of the walnut-trees he so much admires, and for the same reason I mean to send him a faithful drawing of one of the Bernese houses. Various parties of ladies and gentlemen, and children, drove past and stared at me; I thought to myself that they were now enjoying the same luxury I formerly did, and would fain have called out to them not to forget this! Towards evening, the snowy mountains were glowing in the clearest outlines and in the loveliest hues.

When I came back, I asked for some music paper, and they referred me to their Pastor, and he to the Forest-ranger, whose daughter gave me two pretty neat sheets. The "Lied" which I alluded to yesterday is now finished; I cannot help after all telling you what it is—but you must not laugh at me—it is actually—but don't think I am seized with hydrophobia—a sonnet, "Die Liebende schreibt."* I am afraid it is not worth much; I think it was more inwardly felt than outwardly well expressed; still there are some good passages in it, and to-morrow I am going to set to music a little poem of Uhland's; a couple of pieces for the piano are also in progress. I can unfortunately form no judgment of my new compositions; I cannot tell whether they are good or bad; and this arises from the circumstance that all the people to whom I have played anything for the last twelve months, forthwith glibly declared it to be wonderfully beautiful, and that

* In the "Liederheft," Opus 15 of his posthumous works.

will never do. I really wish that some one would let me have a little rational blame once more, or what would be still more agreeable, a little *rational* praise, and then I should find it less indispensable to act the censor towards myself, and to be so distrustful of my own powers. Nevertheless, I must go on writing in the meantime.

When I was at the Forest-ranger's, I heard that the whole country is devastated, and the most sad intelligence comes from all sides. All the bridges in the Hasli valley are entirely swept away, and also many houses and cottages. A man came here to-day from Lauterbrunnen, who had to wade up to the middle in water; the high road is ruined, and what sounded most dismal of all to me, a quantity of furniture and household things were seen floating down the Kander, coming no one knows whence. Happily the waters are beginning to subside, but the damage they have done cannot so easily be repaired. My travelling plans have also been considerably disturbed by these inundations, for if there be any risk, I shall certainly not go into the mountains.

The 11th.

So I now close the first part of my journal, and send it off to you. To-morrow I shall begin a new one, for I intend then to go to Lauterbrunnen. The road is practicable for pedestrians, and not an idea of any danger; travellers from thence have come here to-day, but for carriages, the road will not be passable during

the remainder of the year. I purpose, therefore, proceeding across the Lesser Scheideck to Grindelwald, and by the Great Scheideck to Meiringen; by Furka and Grimsel to Altorf, and so on to Lucerne; storms, rain, and everything else permitting,—which means, if God will. This morning early, I was on the Harder, and saw the mountains in the utmost splendour. I never remember the Jungfrau so clear and so glowing as both yesterday evening and at early dawn to-day. I rode back to Interlachen, where I finished my sketch of the walnut-tree. After that I composed for a time, and wrote three waltzes for the Forest-ranger's daughter on the remaining music-paper she had given me, politely presenting them to her myself. I have just returned from a watery expedition to an inundated reading-room, as I wished to see how the Poles are getting on—unluckily there is no reference to them in the papers. I must now occupy myself till the evening in packing, but I am most reluctant to leave this room, where I am so comfortable, and shall sadly miss my little piano. I intend to sketch the view from this window with my pen on the back of my letter, and also to write out my second "Lied" and then Unterseen will be to me a thing of the past. "Ach! wie schnell!" I quote myself, which is not over-modest, but these lines recur to me but too often when the days are shortening, the leaves of the travelling map turned over, and first Weimar, then Munich, and lastly Vienna, are all things of a year ago. Well! here you may have my window!

An hour later.—My plans are altered, and I stay here till the day after to-morrow. The people say that by that time the roads will be considerably better, and there is plenty here both to see and to sketch. The Aar has not risen to such a height for seventy years. To-day people were stationed on the bridge, with poles and hooks, watching to catch any fragments of the broken-down bridges. It did look so strange to see a black object come swimming along in the distance from the hills, which was at last recognized to be a piece of balustrade, or a cross-beam, or something of the sort, when all the people made a rush at it, and tried to fish

it up with their hooks, and at length succeeded in dragging the monster out of the water. But enough of water,—that is, of my journal. It is now evening, and dark. I am writing by candle-light, and wish I could knock at your door, and take my seat beside you at the round table. It is the old story over again. Wherever it is bright and cheerful, and I am well and happy, I most keenly feel your absence, and most long to be with you again. Who knows, however, whether we may not come here together in future years, and then think of this day, as we now do of former ones? But as none can tell whether this may ever come to pass, I shall meditate no longer on the subject, but write out my "Lied," take another peep of the mountains, wish you all happiness and good fortune, and thus close my journal.

Lauterbrunnen, August 13th, 1831.

I have just returned from a walk in the direction of the Schmadri Bach, and the Breithorn. Any possible conception of the vastness and boldness of the mountains here, must fall far short of the reality of nature. That Goethe could write nothing in Switzerland but a few weak poems, and still weaker letters, is to me as incomprehensible as many other things in this world. The road here is again in a lamentable state; where, six days ago, there was the most beautiful highway, there is now only a desolate mass of rocks; numbers of huge blocks lying about, and heaps of rubbish and sand. No trace whatever of human hands to be seen.

The waters, indeed, have entirely subsided, but they are still in a troubled state, for from time to time you can hear the stones tossed about, and the waterfalls also in the midst of their white foam, roll down black stones into the valley.

My guide pointed out to me a pretty new house, standing in the midst of a wild turbulent stream: he said that it belonged to his brother-in-law, and formerly stood in a beautiful meadow, which had been very profitable; the man was obliged to leave the house during the night; the meadow has disappeared for ever, and masses of pebbles and stones have usurped its place. "He never was rich, but now he is poor," said he, in concluding his sad story. The strangest thing is, that in the very centre of this frightful devastation, —the Lutschine having overflowed the whole extent of the valley—among the marshy meadows, and masses of rocks, where there is no longer even a trace of a road, stands a *char-à-banc*—and is likely to stand for some time to come. It chanced that the people in it wished to drive through at the very time of the hurricane; then came the inundation, so they were forced to leave the carriage and everything else to fate, thus the *char-à-banc* is still standing waiting there. It was a frightful sight when we reached the spot, where the whole valley, with its roads and embankments, is a perfect rocky sea; and my guide, who went first, kept whispering to himself, "'sisch furchtbar." The torrent had carried into the middle of the stream a couple of large

trunks of trees, which are standing aloft; for at the same moment some huge fragments of rocks having been flung against them, the bare trees were closely wedged in betwixt them, and they now stand nearly perpendicular in the bed of the river.

I should never come to an end were I to try to tell you all the various forms of havoc which I saw between this place and Unterseen. Still the beauty of the valley made a stronger impression on me than I can describe. It is much to be regretted, that when you were in this country, you went no further than Staubbach; for it is from there that the valley of Lauterbrunnen really begins. The "Schwarze Mönch," with all the other snowy mountains in the background, becomes more mighty and grand, and on every side bright foaming cascades tumble into the valley. You gradually approach the mountains covered with snow, and the glaciers in the background, through pine woods, and oaks, and maple-trees. The moist meadows, too, were covered with a profusion of brilliant flowers,—snake-wort, the wild scabious, campanulas, and many others. Beside me the Lutschine rolled along boulders, having swept down fragments of rocks, as my guide said, "bigger than a stove," then the carved brown wooden houses, and the hedges; it is all beautiful beyond measure! Unfortunately we could not get to the Schmadri Bach, as bridges, paths, and fords, were all gone; but it was a walk I can never forget.

I also tried to sketch the Mönch; but what can you

hope to do with a small pencil? Hegel indeed says, "that every single human thought is more sublime than all Nature;" but in this place I consider that too presumptuous; the axiom sounds indeed very fine, but is a confounded paradox nevertheless. I am quite contented for the present to adhere to "all Nature," which is the safer course. You know the situation of the inn here, and if you cannot recall it, refer to my former Swiss drawing-book, where you will find it sketched badly enough, and where I put in a footpath in front, from imagination, which made me laugh heartily to-day, when I thought of it. I am at this moment looking out of the same window, and gazing at the dark mountains, for it is late in the evening, that is, a quarter to eight o'clock, and I have an idea, "which is more sublime than all Nature"—I mean to go to bed; so good-night, dear ones.

The 14th, ten o'clock in the forenoon.

From the dairy hut on the Wengern Alp, in heavenly weather, I send you my greetings.

Grindelwald, evening.

I could not write more to you early this morning; I was most reluctant to leave the Jungfrau. What a day this has been for me! Ever since we were here together I have wished to see the Lesser Scheideck once more. So I woke early to-day, with some misgivings, for so much might intervene—bad weather, clouds, rain, fogs—but none of these occurred. It was a day as if

made on purpose for me to cross the Wengern Alp. The sky was flecked with white clouds, floating far above the highest snowy peaks; no mists below on any of the mountains, and all their summits glittering brightly in the morning air; every undulation, and the face of every hill clear and distinct. Why should I even attempt to portray it? You have already seen the Wengern Alp, but at that time we had bad weather, whereas to-day the whole mountain range was in holiday attire. Nothing was wanting; from thundering avalanches, to its being Sunday, and people dressed in their best going to church, just as it was then.

The hills had only dwelt in my memory as gigantic peaks, for their great altitude had entirely absorbed me. To-day I was struck with amazement at the immense extent of their base, their solid, spacious masses, and the connection of all these huge piles, which seem to lean towards each other, and to reach out their hands to one another. In addition to this, you must imagine every glacier, and snowy plateau, and point of rock, dazzlingly lighted up and glittering. Then the far summits of distant mountain-ranges stretching hither, as if surveying the others. I do believe that such are the thoughts of the Almighty. Those who do not yet know Him, may here see Him, and the nature He created, visibly displayed. Then the fresh, bracing air, which refreshes you when weary, and cools you when heated, —and so many springs! I must at some future time write you a separate treatise on springs, but I have not

time for it to-day, as I have something particular to tell you.

Now you will say, I suppose, he came down the mountain again, and is going to inform us once more how beautiful Switzerland is. Not at all. When I arrived at the herdsman's hut, I was told that in a meadow far up the Alps, there was to be a great fête this very day, and in the distance I saw people at intervals climbing the mountain. I was not at all fatigued; an Alpine fête is not to be seen every day the weather said, *yes;* the guide was only too willing. "Let us go to Itramen," said I. The old herdsman led the way, and we were obliged to climb very vigorously; for Itramen is more than a thousand feet higher than the Lesser Scheideck. The herdsman was a ruthless fellow, for he ran on before us like a cat; he soon took pity on my guide, and relieved him of my cloak and knapsack, but even with them he continued to push forward so eagerly that we really could not keep up with him. The path was frightfully steep; he extolled it however, being accustomed to follow a much shorter, but much steeper track: he was about sixty years of age, and when my youthful guide and I with difficulty surmounted one hill, we invariably saw him disappearing behind the next. We walked on for two hours in the most fatiguing path I ever encountered; first a steep ascent, then down again into a hollow, over heaps of crumbling stones, and brooks and ditches, across some snowfields, in the most profound solitude, without a footpath, or

the most remote trace of the hand of man; occasionally we could still hear the avalanches from the Jungfrau; otherwise all was still, and not a tree to be seen.

When this silence and solitude had continued for some time, and we had clambered to the top of a grassy acclivity, we suddenly came in sight of a vast number of people standing in a circle, laughing, speaking, and shouting, They were all in gay attire, and had flowers in their hats; there were a great many girls, some tables with casks of wine, and all around deep solemn silence, and tremendous mountains. It was singular that while I was in the act of climbing, I thought of nothing but rocks and stones, and the snow and the track; but the moment I saw human beings, all the rest was forgotten, and I only thought of men, and their sports, and the merry fête. It was really a fine sight. The scene was in a spacious green meadow far above the clouds; opposite were the snowy mountains in all their prodigious altitude, more especially the dome of the great Eiger, the Schreckhorn, and the Wetterhörner, and all the others as far as the Blümli's Alp; the Lauterbrunnen valley lay far beneath us in the misty depths, quite small, as well as our road of yesterday, with all the little cataracts like threads, the houses like dots, and the trees like grass. Far in the background the Lake of Thun occasionally glanced out of the mist.

The crowd now began wrestling, and singing, and drinking, and laughing; all healthy, strong men. I greatly enjoyed the wrestling, which I had never before

seen. The girls served the men with *kirschwasser* and *schnaps;* the flasks passed from hand to hand, and I drank with them, and gave three little children some cakes, which made them quite happy; a very tipsy old peasant sang me some songs; then they all sang; then the guide favoured us with a modern song; and then two little boys fought. *Everything* pleased me on the Alp, and I remained lying there till towards evening, and made myself quite at home. We descended rapidly into the meadows below, and soon descried the familiar inn, and its windows glittering in the evening sun; a fresh breeze from the glaciers began to blow; this soon cooled us. It is now getting late, and from time to time avalanches are heard,—so thus has my Sunday been spent.—A fête-day indeed!

On the Faulhorn, August 15th.

Ugh! how cold I am! Outside thick snow is falling, and the wind raging and blustering. We are eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, and ought to be far away over the snow, but here I am still! Nothing can be seen; all day the weather has been dreadful. When I remember how fine it was yesterday, while I earnestly wish that it may be as fine to-morrow, it reminds me of life, for we are always hovering between longings for the future and the past. Yesterday seems as far past and remote, as if I knew it only from old memories, and had scarcely been present myself; for to-day when during five mortal hours we were strug-

gling on, against rain and fog, sticking in the mud, and seeing nothing round us but grey vapours, I could scarcely realize that it ever was, or ever will be again fine weather, or that I ever lay idly stretched on this wet marshy grass. Besides, everything here wears such a wintry aspect; heated stoves, thick snow, cloaks, freezing, shivering people. I am at this moment in the highest inn in Europe; and just as in St. Peter's, you look down on every church, and on the Simplon, upon every road, so from hence I look down on all other inns; but not in a figurative sense, for this is little more than a few wooden planks. Never mind. I am now going to bed, and I will no longer watch my own breath. Good night! "Tom's a cold."

Hospital, August 18th.

I have not been able to open my journal for two or three days, as when night came I had no longer time for anything, but to dry myself and my clothes at the fire, to warm myself, to sigh over the weather, like the stove behind which I took refuge, and to sleep a good deal; besides, I did not wish to try your patience, by my everlasting repetitions of how deep I had sunk in the mud, and how incessantly it rained, and so forth. During the last few days in reality I went through the most beautiful country, and yet saw nothing but thick fogs, and water in the sky, and from the sky, and on the earth. I passed places that I had long wished to visit, without being able to enjoy them; what also damped my writing mood, was being obliged to battle with the

weather, and if it continues the same, I shall only write occasionally, for really I should have nothing to say, but "a grey sky—rain and fog." I have been on the Faulhorn, the Great Scheideck, on Grimsel Spital, and to-day I crossed Grimsel and Furka, and the principal objects I have seen were the points of my shabby umbrella, and I had not even the glimpse of the huge mountains. At one moment, to-day, the Finsteraarhorn came to light; but it looked as savage as if it wished to devour us; and yet when it was fair for a single half-hour, it was truly beautiful. A journey on foot through this country, even in the most unfavourable weather, is the most enchanting thing you can possibly imagine; if the sky were bright, I think the excess of pleasure would be quite everpowering; I must not therefore complain too much of the weather, for I have had my full share of enjoyment.

During the last few days however I felt like Tantalus. When I was on the Scheideck, a glimpse of the lower part of the Wetterhorn was sometimes visible through the clouds, and it seemed beyond measure magnificent and sublime; but I only saw the base. On the Faulhorn, I could not distinguish objects fifty paces off, although I stayed there till ten o'clock in the morning. We went down to the Scheideck in a heavy snow-storm, by a very wet and difficult path, which the incessant rain had made worse than usual. We arrived at Grimsel Spital in rain and storm. To-day I wished to have ascended the Sidelhorn, but was obliged to give it up

on account of the fog. The Mayenwand was shrouded in grey clouds, and we had only a single peep of the Finsteraarhorn, when we were on the Furka. We also arrived here in a torrent of rain and water everywhere, but all this does not signify. My guide is a capital fellow: if it rains, he sings and *jodels;* if it is fine, so much the better: and though I failed in seeing some of the finest objects, still I saw a great deal that was interesting.

On this occasion I have formed a particular friendship for the glaciers; they are, indeed, the most marvellous monsters in the world. How strangely they are all tumbled about; here a row of jagged points, there toppling crags, and above, towers and bastions, while on every side, crevices and ravines are visible, all of the most wondrous pure ice, that rejects all soil of earth, casting up again on the surface the stones, sand, and gravel, flung down by the mountains. Then the superb colouring, when the sun shines on them, and their mysterious advance—they sometimes have moved on a foot and a half in a single day, so that the villagers are in the greatest anxiety and alarm, when the glacier arrives so quietly, and yet so irresistibly (for it shivers rocks and stones when they lie in the way),—then the ominous crashing and thundering, and the rushing of so many springs near and around. They are splendid miracles. I was in the Rosenlaui glacier, which forms a kind of cave, that you can creep through; it looks as if built of emeralds, only more transparent. Above,

around, on all sides, you can see rivulets running be tween the clear ice. In the centre of this narrow passage, the ice has left a large round window, through which you look down on the valley, and issue forth again under an arch of ice, and high above, black peaks rear their heads, from which masses of ice roll down in the boldest undulations. The glacier of the Rhone is the most imposing that I have seen, and the sun burst forth on it as we passed early this morning. This is a suggestive sight, and you get a casual glimpse of the rocky peak of a mountain, snowfields, cataracts, and bridges spanning them, and masses of crumbling stones and rocks; in short, even if you can only see little in Switzerland, it is at all events more than is to be seen in any other country.

I have been drawing very busily, and think I have made some progress. I even tried to sketch the Jungfrau; it will at least serve as a reminiscence, and I can enjoy the thought that these strokes were actually made on the spot itself. When I see people rushing through Switzerland, and declaring that they find nothing to admire there, or anywhere else (except themselves); not the least affected or stirred, remaining cold and prosaic, even in presence of the mountains, I feel a wish to give them a good drubbing. Here are two Englishmen and an English lady at this moment sitting beside me by the stove; they are more wooden than sticks. We have been travelling the same road for a couple of days, and I declare the people have never

uttered a syllable except of abuse; that there were no fireplaces either on the Grimsel, or here; but that there are *mountains* here, is a fact to which they never allude; their whole journey is occupied in scolding their guide, who laughs at them, in quarrelling with the innkeepers, and in yawning in each other's faces. They think everything commonplace, because they are themselves commonplace, therefore they are not happier in Switzerland than they would be in Bernau. Well, well; happiness is a relative term; another would thank God that he could see all this, and so I will be that other.

Fluelen, August 10th.

A day made for a journey; fine, and enjoyable, and bracing. When we wished to start this morning at six o'clock, there was such a storm of sleet and snow that we were obliged to wait till nine o'clock, when the sun came forth, the clouds dispersed, and we had delightful bright weather as far as this place; but now sombre clouds, heavy with rain, have collected over the lake, so that no doubt to-morrow the old troubles will break loose again. But how glorious this day has been, so clear and sunny—we had the most charming journey! You know the St. Gothard Road in all its beauty; you lose much by coming down from above, instead of ascending from this point, for the grand surprise of the Urner Loch is entirely lost, and the new road which has been made, with all the grandeur, as well as convenience, of the Simplon, impairs the effect of the

Devil's Bridge: inasmuch as close beside it a new arch, much bolder and broader, has been constructed, which makes the old bridge appear quite insignificant, but the ancient crumbling walls look much more romantic and picturesque. Though the view of Andermatt is thus lost, and the new Devil's Bridge far from being poetical, still you go merrily downhill all day, on a delightfully smooth road, flying rapidly past the various localities, and instead of being sprinkled by the foam of the waterfall on the old bridge as formerly, and endangered by the wind, you now pass along far above the stream, between two ranges of solid parapets.

We came past Göschenen and Wasen, and presently appeared the huge firs and beech-trees close to Amsteg; then the charming valley of Altorf, with its cottages, meadows, and woods, its rocks and snowy mountains. We rested at Altorf, in a Capuchin Convent, situated on a height; and finally, here I am on the banks of the Lake of Lucerne. To-morrow I purpose crossing the lake to Lucerne, where I hope to find letters from you. I shall then also get rid of a party of young people from Berlin, who have been pursuing almost the same route with me, meeting me at every turn, and boring me terribly; the patriotism of a lieutenant, a dyer, and a young carpenter,—all three bent on destroying France,—was peculiarly distasteful to me.

Sarnen, the 20th.

I crossed the Lake of Lucerne early this morning, in

a continued pour of rain, and found your welcome letter of the 5th. As it contained nothing but good tidings, I immediately arranged a tour of three days to Unterwalden and the Brünig. I intend to call again at Lucerne for your next letter, and then I am off to the West, and out of Switzerland. I shall take leave of it with deep regret. The country is beautiful beyond all conception; and though the weather is again odious,—rain and storms the whole day, and all through the night,—yet the Tellsplatte, the Grütli, Brunnen and Schwytz, and the dazzling green of the meadows this evening in Unterwalden, are too lovely ever to be forgotten. The hue of this green is most unique, refreshing the eye and the whole being. I shall certainly attend to your kind precautionary injunctions, dear Mother, but you need be under no apprehensions about me. I am by no means careless with regard to my health, and have not, for a long time, felt so well as during my pedestrian excursion in Switzerland. If eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and music in one's head, can make a man healthy, then, God be praised, I may well call myself so; for my guide and I vie with each other in eating and drinking, and unfortunately in singing too. In sleeping alone I beat him; and though I sometimes interrupt his singing by my trumpet or oboe tones, he in turn interrupts my morning sleep. Please God, we shall have a happy meeting. Before that time arrives, however, many a page of my journal must yet travel to you; but even this interval

will quickly pass, just as everything quickly passes, except indeed what is best of all!—so let us be true and loving to each other.

FELIX.

Engelberg, August 23rd, 1831.

My heart is so full that I must tell you about it. In this enchanting valley I have just taken up Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell," and read half of the first scene; there is surely no genius like that of Germany! Heaven knows why, but I do think that no other nation could fully comprehend such an opening scene, far less be able to compose it. This is what I call a poem, and a beginning; first the pure, clear verse, in which the lake, smooth as a mirror, and all else, is so vividly described, and then the slow commonplace Swiss talk, and Baumgarten rushing in,—it is quite glorious! How fresh, how powerful, how exciting! We have no such work as this in music, and yet even that sphere ought one day to produce something equally perfect. It is so admirable in him too, to have created an entire Switzerland for himself, inasmuch as he never saw it, and yet all is so faithful and so strikingly truthful; the people and life, the scenery and nature. I was delighted when the old innkeeper here, in a solitary mountain village, brought me from the monastery the book with the well-known characters and old familiar names; but the opening again quite surpassed all my expectations.

It is now more than four years since I read it. I mean presently to go over to the monastery, to work off my excitement on the organ.

Afternoon.

Do not be astonished at my enthusiasm, but read the scene through again yourself, and then you will find my excitement quite natural. Such passages as those where all the shepherds and hunters shout "Save him! save him!" and at the close of the Grütli scene, when the sun is about to rise, could indeed only have occurred to a German, and above all to Schiller; and the whole piece is crowded with similar passages. Let me refer to that particular one at the end of the second scene, where Tell comes with the rescued Baumgarten to Stauffacher, and the animated scene closes in such tranquillity and peace: the treatment, to say nothing of the beauty of the thought, is so thoroughly Swiss. Then the beginning of the Grütli scene—the symphony which the orchestra ought to play at the end I composed in my mind to-day, because I could do nothing satisfactory on the little organ: altogether a variety of plans and ideas occurred to me. There is a vast deal to do in this world, and I mean to be industrious. The expression that Goethe made use of to me, that Schiller could have *supplied* two great tragedies every year, with its business-like tone, always inspired me with particular respect; but not till this morning did the full force of its signification become clear to me, and it has made me feel that I must set to work in earnest. Even

the errors of the play are captivating, and there is something grand in them; and though certainly Bertha Rudenz, and old Attinghausen, seem to me great blemishes, still Schiller's idea is evident, and he was in a manner forced to do as he has done; and it is consolatory to find that even so great a man could for once commit such an egregious mistake.

I have passed a most enjoyable morning, and I feel in the kind of mood which makes one long to recall such a man to life, in order to thank him, and which inspires an earnest desire one day, to compose a work that may impress others with similar feelings.

Probably you do not understand what induced me to take up my quarters here in Engelberg. It happened thus:—I have not had a single day's rest since I left Untersee, and therefore wished to remain for a day at Meiringen, but was tempted by the lovely weather in the morning, to come on here. The usual rain and wind assailed me on the mountains, and so I arrived very tired. This is the nicest inn imaginable,—clean, tidy, very small and rustic,—an old white-haired innkeeper; a wooden house, situated in a meadow, a little apart from the road; and the people so kind and cordial, that I feel quite at home. I think this kind of domestic comfort is only to be found among those who speak the German tongue; at all events, I never met with it anywhere else; and though other nations may not feel the want of it, or scarcely like it, still *I* am a native of Hamburg, and so it makes me feel happy and at home.

It is not therefore strange that I decided on taking my day's rest here with these worthy old people. My room has windows on every side, commanding a view of the valley: the room is prettily panelled with wood; some coloured texts and a crucifix are hanging on the walls; there is a solid green stove, and a bench encircling it, and two lofty bedsteads. When I am lying in bed I have the following view:—

I have failed again in my buildings, and in the hills too, but I hope to make a better sketch of it for you in my book, if the weather be tolerable to-morrow. I shall always consider this valley to be one of the loveliest in all Switzerland. I have not yet seen the gigan-

tic mountains by which it is encompassed, as they have been all day shrouded in mist; but the beautiful meadows, the numerous brooks, the houses, and the foot of the hills, so far as I could see them, are exquisitely lovely. The green of the Unterwalden is more brilliant than in any other canton, and it is celebrated for its meadows even among the Swiss. The previous journey too from Sarnen was enchanting, and never did I see larger or finer trees, or a more fruitful country. Moreover the road is attended with as few difficulties as if you were traversing a large garden; the declivities are clothed with tall slender beeches; the stones overgrown by moss and herbs; then there are springs, brooks, small lakes, and houses: on one side is a view of Unterwalden and its green plains; and shortly after a view of the whole vale of Hasli, the snowy mountains, and cataracts leaping down from rocky precipices; the road too is shaded the whole way by enormous trees.

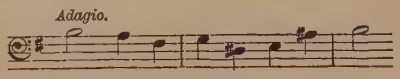
Yesterday, early, as I told you, I was tempted by the bright sun to cross the Genthel valley to ascend the Joch, but on the summit the most dreadful weather set in; we were obliged to make our way through the snow, and this was sometimes anything but pleasant. We speedily however emerged out of the sleet and snow, and an enchanting moment ensued, when the clouds broke, while we were still standing in them; and far beneath us, we saw through the mists as through a black veil, the green valley of Engelberg. We soon made our way down, and heard the silvery bell of the

monastery ring out the Ave Maria. We next saw the white building on the meadow, and arrived here after an expedition of nine hours. I need not say how acceptable at such a time is a comfortable inn, and how good the rice and milk seems, and how long you sleep next morning.

To-day we have had very disagreeable weather, so they brought me "Wilhelm Tell" from the library of the monastery, and the rest you know. I was much struck by Schiller having so completely failed in portraying Rudenz, for the whole character is feeble, and without sufficient motive, and it seems as if he had resolved purposely to represent him throughout, in the worst possible light. His words, in the apple scene, might tend to redeem him, but being preceded by that with Bertha, they make no impression. When he joins the Swiss, after the death of Attinghausen, it might be supposed that he is changed, but he instantly declares that his Bertha is carried off, so again he has as little merit as ever. It occurred to me that if he had uttered the very same manly words against Gessler, without the explanation with Bertha having previously taken place, and if such a result had arisen out of this in the following act, the character would have been much better, and the declaration scene not such mere stage business as it now is. This is certainly very like "teaching one's grandmother, etc.," but I should like to hear your opinion on the subject. I dare not speak to one of our learned men on such matters; these

gentlemen are a vast deal too wise! If however I chance some of these days to meet one of those youthful modern poets, who look down on Schiller, and only partly approve of him; woe betide him! for I must crush him to death.

Now, good night; I must rise very early to-morrow: it is to be a grand fête-day in the monastery, and a solemn religious service, and I am to play the organ for them. The monks were listening this morning while I was extemporizing a little, and were so pleased, that they invited me to play the people in and out at their festival, to-morrow. The father organist has also given me the subject on which I am to extemporize; it is better than any that would have occurred to an organist in Italy.



I shall see to-morrow what I can make of this. I played a couple of new pieces of mine on the organ this afternoon in the church, and they sounded rather well. When I came past the monastery the same evening, the church was closed, and scarcely were the doors shut, when the monks began to sing nocturns fervently, in the dark church; they intoned the deep B, which sounded splendidly, and could be heard far down the valley.

August 24th.

This has been another splendid day—the weather

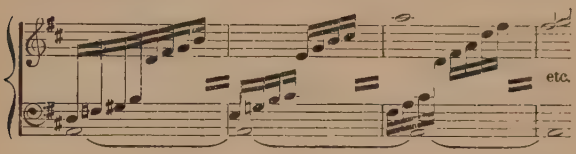
bright and enjoyable, and the bluest sky that I have seen since I left Chamouni; it was a holiday in the village, and in all the mountains. After long-continued fogs, and every variety of bad weather, once more to see from the window in the morning the clear range of mountains and their pinnacles, is indeed a grand spectacle. They are acknowledged to be finest after rain, and to-day looked as fresh as if they had just burst the shell. This valley is not surpassed by any in Switzerland. If I ever return here this shall be my head-quarters, for it is even more lovely, and more spacious and unconfined than Chamouni, and more free than Interlachen. The Spannörter are incredibly grand peaks, and the round snow-laden Titlis, the foot of which lies in the meadows, and the effect of the Urner rocks in the distance, are also well worth seeing: it is now full-moon, and the valley is clothed in beauty.

This whole day I have done nothing but sketch, and play the organ: in the morning I performed my duties as organist—it was a grand affair. The organ stands close to the high altar, next to the stalls for the "patres;"—so I took my place in the midst of the monks, a very Saul among the prophets. An impatient Benedictine at my side played the double bass, and others the violins; one of their dignitaries was first violin. The *pater præceptor* stood in front of me, sang a solo, and conducted with a long stick, as thick as my arm. The convent scholars, in their black cowls, formed the choir; an old decayed rustic played on an old decayed

oboe, and at a little distance two more were puffing away composedly at two huge trumpets with green tassels; and yet with all this the affair was gratifying. It was impossible not to like the people, for they were in earnest, and did their best. A mass, by Emmerich, was given, and every note of it betrayed its "powder and pigtail." I played thorough-bass faithfully from my ciphered part, adding wind instruments from time to time, when I was weary; made the responses, extemporized on the appointed theme, and at the end, by desire of the Prelate, played a march, in spite of my repugnance to doing so on the organ, and was then honourably dismissed.

This afternoon I played again alone to the monks, who gave me the finest subjects in the world—the "Credo" among others—a *fantasia* on the latter was very successful; it is the only one that in my life I ever wished I could have written down, but now I can only remember its general purport, and must ask permission to send Fanny, in this letter, a passage that I do not wish to forget. By degrees various counter subjects were introduced in opposition to the *canto fermo;* first dotted notes, then triplets, at last rapid semiquavers, through which the "Credo" was to work its way; quite at the close, the semiquavers became very wild, and arpeggios followed on the whole organ in C minor. I proceeded to take up the theme on the pedal in long notes (during the continued arpeggios), so that it ended with A, which I sustained in the pedal

through the arpeggios, which it suddenly occurred to me to play with the left hand alone, so that the right hand could introduce the "Credo" again in the treble with A, thus:—



This was followed by a stop on the last note, and a pause, and then it concluded. I wish you had heard it, for I am sure you would have been pleased. It was time for the monks to go to *complines*, and we took leave of each other cordially. They wished to give me letters of introduction for some other places in Unterwalden, but I declined this, as I intend to go to Lucerne early to-morrow, and after that I expect not to be more than five or six days longer in Switzerland.—Your

FELIX.

TO WILHELM TAUBERT.

Lucerne, August 27th, 1831.

I wish to offer you my thanks, but I really do not know where to begin first; whether for the pleasure your songs caused me in Milan, or for your kind letter which I received yesterday; both however are closely

connected, and so I think we have already made acquaintance. It is quite as fitting that we should be presented to each other through the medium of music-paper, as by a third person in society; indeed I think that in the former case you feel even more intimate and confidential. Moreover, persons who introduce any one often pronounce the name so indistinctly, that you seldom know who is standing before you; and they never say one word as to whether the man is gay and good-humoured, or melancholy and gloomy. So we are infinitely better off. Your songs have pronounced your name clearly and plainly; they also disclose what you think and what you are; that you love music, and wish to make progress; so thus perhaps I know you better than if we had frequently met.

What a source of pleasure it is, and how cheering, to know there is another musician in the world who has the same purposes and aspirations, and who follows the same path as yourself; perhaps you cannot feel this so strongly as I do at this moment, who have just come from a country where music no longer exists among the people. I never before could have believed this of any nation, and least of all of Italy, with such rich and luxuriant nature, and such glorious, inspiriting antecedents. But alas! the occurrences I latterly witnessed there, fully proved to me that even more than harmony is dead in that land; it would indeed be marvellous if any music could exist where there is no solid principle. At last I was really bewildered,

and thought that I must have become a hypochondriac, for all the buffoonery I saw was most distasteful to me, and yet a vast number of serious people and sedate citizens entered into it. When they played me anything of their own, and afterwards praised and extolled my pieces, I cannot tell you how repugnant it was to me; I felt disposed to become a hermit, with beard and cowl, and the whole world was at a discount with me. In Italy you first learn to value a true musician; that is, one whose thoughts are absorbed in *music*, and not in money, or decorations, or ladies, or fame; it is doubly delightful when you find that, without your being aware of it, the same ideas as your own exist and are developed elsewhere; your songs therefore gave me especial pleasure, because I could gather from them that you must be a genuine musician, and so let us mutually clasp hands across the mountains.

But now let me at once beg of you to treat me as a friend, and not to write so formally as to my "counsel" and "teaching." This portion of your letter makes me feel almost nervous, and I scarcely know what to say; the most agreeable part however is your promise to send me something to Munich, and to write to me again. I will then tell you frankly and freely my honest opinion, and you shall do the same with regard to my new compositions, and thus I think we shall give each other good counsel. I am very eager to see those recent works of yours that you have promised me, for I do not doubt that I shall receive great gratification from

them, and much which is only foreshadowed in the former songs, will probably in these become manifest and distinct. I shall therefore say nothing to-day of the impression your songs have made on me, because possibly any suggestion or question may be already answered in what you are about to send me. Pray write to me fully, and in detail, about yourself, in order that we may become better acquainted. I can then write to you what I purpose and what I think, and thus we shall continue in close connection.

Let me know what you have recently composed, and are now composing; your mode of life in Berlin, and your plans for the future; in short, all that concerns your musical life, which will be of the greatest interest to me. Probably this will be obvious in the music you have so kindly promised me, but fortunately both may be combined. Have you hitherto composed nothing on a greater scale; a spirited symphony, an opera, or something of the kind? I, for my part, feel at this moment the most invincible desire to write an opera, and have no leisure to commence even any minor work. I do believe that if the libretto were to be given to me to-day, the opera would be written by to-morrow, so strong is my impulse towards it. Formerly the bare idea of a symphony was so exciting, that I could think of nothing else when one was in my head; the sound of instruments has such a solemn and glorious effect; and yet for some time past I have laid aside a symphony that I had commenced, in order to compose a cantata

from Goethe, merely because it included, besides the orchestra, voices and a chorus. I intend now, indeed, to complete the symphony, but there is nothing I so strongly covet as a regular opera.

Where the libretto is to come from I know less than ever since last night, when for the first time for more than a year I saw a German æsthetic paper. Things look as strange on the German Parnassus as in European politics. God help us! I was obliged to digest the supercilious Menzel, who presumed modestly to depreciate Goethe,—and the supercilious Grabbe, who modestly depreciates Shakspeare,—and the philosophers who proclaim Schiller to be rather trivial! Is this new, arrogant, overbearing spirit, this perverse cynicism, as odious to you as it is to me? and are you of the same opinion with myself, that the first essential to an artist is to feel respect for great men, and to bow down in spirit before them; to recognize their merits, and not to endeavour to extinguish their great flame, in order that his own feeble rushlight may burn a little brighter? If a person be incapable of feeling true greatness, I should like to know how he intends to make *me* feel it? And if all these people, with their airs of contempt, only at last succeed in producing imitations of this or that particular form, without any notion of a free, fresh creative power, which disregards individual opinion, or æsthetics or criticism, or the whole world besides, shall we not censure them? I will, for one. Pray do not take this amiss; perhaps I have gone too far. But it

was long since I had read anything of the kind, and it enraged me to see that such folly still goes on, and that the philosopher who maintains that art is dead, still persists in declaring that it is so; as if art could in reality ever die.

These are truly strange, wild, and troubled times; and let those who feel that art is no more, allow it for Heaven's sake to rest in peace; but however roughly the storm may rage without, it cannot so quickly succeed in sweeping away the dwelling; and he who works on quietly within, fixing his thoughts on his own capabilities and purposes, and not on those of others, will see the hurricane blow over, and afterwards find it difficult to realize that it ever was so violent as it appeared at the time. I have resolved to act thus so long as I can, and to pursue my path steadily, for at all events no one will deny that music still exists, and that is the chief thing.

How cheering it is to meet with a person who has chosen the same object and the same means as yourself! and I would fain tell you how gratifying each new corroboration of this is to me, but I scarcely know how to do so. You must imagine it for yourself, and your own thoughts must supply any deficiencies; so farewell! Pray let me hear from you soon, and frequently. I beg to send my kindest regards to our dear friend Berger;* I have been long intending to write to him, but have never yet accomplished it. I shall cer-

* Ludwig Berger, Mendelssohn's instructor on the piano.

tainly however do so one of these days. Forgive this long, dry letter; the next shall be more interesting; and now once more farewell.—Yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

Righi Culm, August 30th, 1831.

I am on the Righi! I need say no more, for you know this mountain. What can be more grand or superb? I left Lucerne early this morning. All the mountains were obscured, and the weather-wise prophesied bad weather. As however I have always found that the very opposite of what the wise people say invariably occurs! I tried to make out signs for myself, though hitherto, in spite of their aid, I have found my predictions quite as false as those of the others; but this morning I really thought the weather very tolerable; still, as I did not wish to begin my ascent while all was still shrouded in vapour (for the Faulhorn had taught me caution), I spent the whole morning in sauntering round the foot of the Righi, gazing eagerly upwards, to see if the mists were likely to clear off. At last, about twelve o'clock, at Küssnacht, I stood on the cross path leading towards the Righi to the right, and Immensee to the left; and making up my mind not to see the Righi on this occasion, I took a tender farewell of it, and went through the Hohle Gasse to the Lake of Zug, along a charming path, past the

water, to Arth; but could not resist frequently glancing at the summit of the Righi Culm, to see if it was becoming clearer; and while I was dining at Arth it did clear up. The wind was very favourable, the clouds lifted on every side; so I made up my mind to begin the ascent.

There was no time to lose however if I wished to witness the sunset; so I went along at a rattling mountain pace, and in the course of two hours and three-quarters reached the Culm, and the well-known house. I then saw about forty persons standing on the top, uplifting their hands in admiration, and gesticulating in a state of the greatest excitement. I ran up, and a new and wondrous sight it was. All the valleys were filled with fogs and clouds, and above them the lofty, snowy crests of the mountains, and the glaciers and black rocks stood out bright and clear. The mists swept onwards, veiling a portion of the scenery; then emerged the Bernese Alps, the Jungfrau, the Mönch, and the Finsteraarhorn; then Titlis, and the Unterwalden mountains. At last the whole range was distinctly visible; the clouds in the valleys now also began to roll away, disclosing the lakes of Lucerne and Zug, and towards the hour of sunset, only thin streaks of bright vapour still floated on the landscape. Coming from the Alps, and then looking towards the Righi, it was as if the overture and other portions were repeated at the end of an opera. All the spots whence you have seen such sublime scenery, the Wengern Alp, the

Wetter Hörner, the valley of Engelberg, here meet the eye once more in close vicinity, and you can take leave of them all. I had imagined that it was only at first, when still ignorant of the glaciers, that so great an impression was made, from the influence of surprise, but I think the effect at the last is even more striking than ever.

Schwytz, August 31st.

Yesterday and to-day I gratefully recalled the happy auspices under which I first made acquaintance with this part of the world. The remembrance of your profound admiration of these wonders, elevating you above every-day life, has contributed not a little to awaken and to quicken my own perception of them. I often to-day recurred to your delight, and the deep impression it made on me at the time. So the Righi is evidently disposed to be gracious to our family, and in consequence of this kindly feeling towards us, conferred on me to-day a sunrise quite as brilliant and splendid as when you were here. The waning noon, the lively Alpine horn, the long-protracted rosy dawn which first stole over the cold, shadowy, snowy mountains, the white clouds on the Lake of Zug, the clear, sharp peaks bending towards each other in all directions, the light which gradually crept on the heights, the restless, shivering people wrapped in coverlets, the monks from Maria zum Schnee, nothing was wanting.

I could not tear myself away from this spectacle, and remained on the summit for six consecutive hours

gazing at the mountains. I thought how many things must change before I looked on them again, so I wished to imprint the sight indelibly on my memory. People came and went, and talked of these anxious, troubled times, of politics, and of the grand mountain range before us.

Thus the morning passed away, and at last, at half-past ten o'clock, I was obliged to go; indeed it was high time, as I wished to get to Einsiedel the same day, by Haken. On my way however, in the steep path leading to Lowerz, my trusty old umbrella, which also served me as a mountain staff, broke to pieces; this detained me, so that I preferred remaining here, and to-morrow I hope to be quite fresh for a start.

Wallenstadt, September 2nd.

(Year of rains and storms.) Motto of the coppersmith—"If you can't sing a new song, then begin the old one afresh." Here am I again in the midst of fogs and clouds, unable to go either backwards or forwards, and if fortune specially favours us, we may have a slight inundation into the bargain. When I crossed the lake, the boatmen prophesied very fine weather, consequently the rain began half an hour later, and is not likely soon to cease, for there are piles of heavy, gloomy clouds, such as you can only see among the mountains. If it were twice as bad three days hence, I should not care, but it would be grievous indeed if Switzerland were to take leave of me with so cross a countenance.

I have this moment returned from the church, where I have been playing the organ for three hours, far into the twilight: an old man, a cripple, blew the bellows for me, and except him, there was not a single soul in the church. The only stops I found available, were a very weak croaking flute, and a quavering deep pedal diapason, of sixteen feet. I contrived to extemporize with these materials, and at last subsided into a choral melody in E minor, without being able to remember what it was. I could not get rid of it, when all at once it occurred to me that it was a Litany, the music of which was in my head because the words were in my heart, so then I had a wide field, and plenty of scope for extemporizing. At length the consumptive deep bass resounded quite alone in E minor, thus:—

and then came in its turn the flute, high up in the treble, with the choral in the same key, and so the sounds of the organ gradually died away, and I was obliged to stop, from the church being so dark.

In the meantime there was a terrible hurricane of wind and rain outside, and not a trace of the grand lofty rocky precipices; the most dreary weather! and then I read some dreary newspapers, and everything wore a grey hue. Tell me, Fanny, do you know Auber's "Parisienne"? I consider it the very worst thing he has ever produced, perhaps because the subject was

really lofty, but for other reasons also. Auber alone could have been guilty of composing for a great nation, in the most violent state of excitement, a cold, insignificant, commonplace, and trivial piece. The *refrain* enrages me every time I think of it,—it is like the singing of children to a toy drum—only more objectionable. The words also are worthless; little antitheses and points are quite out of place here. Then the emptiness of the music! a march for acrobats, and at the end a mere miserable imitation of the "Marseillaise." Such music is not what this epoch demands. Woe to us *if* it be indeed what suits this epoch,—if a mere copy of the Marseillaise Hymn be all that is required. What in the latter is full of fire, and spirit, and impetus, is in the former ostentatious, cold, calculated, and artificial. The "Marseillaise" is as superior to the "Parisienne" as everything produced by genuine enthusiasm must be, to what is made for a purpose, even if it be with a view to promote enthusiasm: it will never reach the heart, because it does not come from the heart.

By the way, I never saw such a striking identity between a poet and a musician, as between Auber and Clauren. Auber faithfully renders note for note, what the other writes word for word—braggadocio, degrading sensuality, pedantry, epicurism, and parodies of foreign nationality. But why should Clauren be effaced from the literature of the day? Is it prejudicial to any one that he should remain where he is? and do you on his

account read what is really good with less interest? A young poet can be no great things, who does not cordially hate and despise such trash; but it is only too true that the people like him; so it is as it should be, the loss is their own. Write me your opinion of the "Parisienne." I sometimes sing it to myself for fun, as I go along; it makes a man walk like a chorister in a procession.

Sargans, September 3rd, noon.

Wretched weather! it has rained all night, and all the morning too, and the cold as severe as in winter; deep snow is lying on the adjacent hills. There has been another fearful inundation in Appenzell, which has done the greatest damage, and destroyed all the roads. At the Lake of Zurich, there are numbers of pilgrimages, and processions, on account of the weather. I was obliged to drive here this morning, as all the footpaths were covered with mud and water. I shall remain till to-morrow, when the diligence passes through at an early hour, and I intend to go with it up the valley of the Rhine, as far as Altstetten.

To-morrow I shall probably have reached, or crossed, the boundaries of Switzerland, for my pleasure excursion is now over. Autumn is arrived, and I have no right to complain if I pass a few tiresome days, after so many enchanting ones, that I can never forget. On the contrary, I think I almost like it; there is always enough to be done, even in Sargans, (a wretched hole,) and on a day of deluge, like this—for happily an organ

is always to be found in this country; they are certainly small, and the lower octave, both in the manual and the pedal, imperfect, or as I call it, crippled; but still they are organs, and that is enough for me.

I have been playing all this morning, and really begun to practise, for it is a shame that I cannot play Sebastian Bach's principal works. I intend, if I can manage it, to practise for an hour every day in Munich, as after a couple of hours' work to-day, I certainly made considerable progress with my feet (*nota bene*, sitting). Ritz once told me that Schneider, in Dresden, played him the D major fugue, in the "wohl-temperirtes Clavier," on the organ, playing the bass on the pedals.

This had hitherto appeared to me so marvellous, that I could never properly comprehend it. It recurred to me this morning when I was playing the organ, so I instantly attempted it, and I at least see that it is far from being impossible, and that I shall accomplish it. I succeeded pretty well with the Thema, so I practised in the same way as many passages as I knew by heart of the D major organ fugue, the F major toccata, and the G minor fugue. If I find a tolerable organ in Munich, and not an imperfect one, I will certainly learn this method, and I look forward like a child to playing such pieces down on the pedals. The F major toccata, with the modulation at the close, sounds as if the church

were about to tumble down: what a giant that Precentor was!*

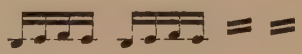
Besides organ-playing, I have a good many sketches to finish, in my new drawing-book, (one was entirely filled in Engelberg) and then I must eat like an army. After dinner I practise the organ again, and thus a rainy day passes at Sargans. It seems prettily situated, with a castle on the hill, but I cannot go a step beyond the door.

Evening.—Yesterday at this time, I still projected a pedestrian tour, and wished at all events to go through the whole of the Appenzell. It was a strange feeling when I learned that all mountain excursions were probably at an end for this year: the heights are covered with deep snow, for just as it has rained here, in the valley, for thirty-six hours, it has snowed incessantly on the hills above. The flocks have been obliged to come down into the valley from the Alps, where they ought to have remained for a whole month yet, so that all idea of any footpaths is out of the question. Yesterday I was still on the hills, but now they will be inaccessible for six months to come. My walking tour is over; wondrously beautiful it was, and I shall never forget it.

I mean to work hard at music, and high time that I should. I played on the organ till twilight, and was trampling furiously on the pedal, when we suddenly became aware that the deep C sharp in the great diapason, went buzzing softly on without ceasing; all our

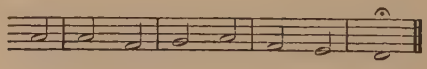
* Sebastian Bach was precentor in Leipzig.

pressing, and shaking, and thumping on the keys, was of no avail, so we were obliged to climb into the organ among the big pipes. The C sharp continued humming,—the fault lay in the wind chest; the organist was in the greatest perplexity, because to-morrow is a fête day; at last I stuffed my handkerchief into the pipe, and there was no more buzzing, but no more C sharp either. I played this passage incessantly, all the same.—



and it already goes pretty well.

I am now going to finish my sketch of the Glacier of the Rhone, and then the day will be at my own disposal; which means that I am going to sleep. I will write to you on the next page to-morrow evening wherever I am, for to-day I have no idea where I shall be. Good night! Eight is striking in F minor, and it is raining and blowing in F sharp minor or G sharp minor; in short, in every possible sharp key.



St. Gall, the 4th.

Motto—"Vous pensez que je suis l'Abbé de St. Gall" (Citoyen).* I do feel so comfortable here, after braving

* Mendelssohn alludes to a poem of Bürger's,—Der Abt von St. Gallen.

such storms and tempests. During the four hours I was crossing the mountains from Altstetten to this place, I was engaged in a regular battle with the elements; when I tell you that I never experienced anything like the storm, nor even imagined anything approaching to it, this does not say much; but the oldest people in the Canton declare the same: a large manufactory has been demolished, and several persons killed. To-morrow, in my last letter from Switzerland, I will tell you how I was again obliged to travel on foot, and how I arrived here, after traversing Appenzell, looking like Egypt after the seventh plague. The bell is now ringing for dinner, and I mean to feast like the Abbot of St Gallen.

Lindau, September 5th.

Opposite me lies Switzerland, with her dark blue mountains, pedestrian journeys, storms, and glorious heights and valleys. Here ends the greatest part of my journey, and journal also.

At noon to-day, I crossed the wild grey Rhine in a ferry-boat, above Rheineck, and now here I am, already in Bavaria. I have of course entirely given up my projected excursion on foot, through the Bavarian mountains; for it would be folly to attempt anything further of the kind this year. For the last four days it has rained more or less violently without intermission; it seemed as if Providence were wroth. I passed to-day through extensive orchards, which were not under water, but fairly submerged by mud and clay; every-

thing looks deplorable and depressing; you must therefore forgive the doleful style of this last sheet. I never in any landscape saw a more dreary sight than the sward of the green hills, covered with deep snow; while below, the fruit-trees, with their ripe fruit, were standing reflected in the water. The scanty covering of muddy snow, which lay on the fir-woods and meadows, looked the personification of all that was dismal. A Sargans burgher told me that in 1811 this little town had been entirely burnt down, and recently with difficulty rebuilt; that they depend chiefly on the produce of their vineyards, which has been this year destroyed by hailstorms, and the mountain pastures also were now no longer available; this gives rise to serious reflections, and to anxious thoughts with regard to this year.

It is singular enough that if I am obliged to go on foot in such weather, and fairly exposed to it, I am not in the least annoyed; on the contrary, I rather rejoice in setting it at defiance. When I arrived by the diligence yesterday at Altstetten, in freezing cold, like a day in December, I found that there was no carriage road to Tourgen, to which place I had unluckily sent on my cloak and knapsack on the last fine day. I was obliged to have them the same evening, for the cold was intense, so I did not hesitate long, but set off once more for the last time to cross the mountains, and entered the Canton of Appenzell.

The state of the paths through the woods, and hills, and meadows, baffles all description; being Sunday,

and divine service going on, I had failed in procuring a guide at Altstetten; not a living soul met me the whole way, for all the people had crept into their houses, so I toiled on quite alone towards Tourgen. To pass through a wood in such weather, and along such paths, inspires a wonderful sense of independence. Moreover I am now quite perfect in the Swiss *jodeln* and crowing, so I shouted lustily, and *jodelled* several airs at the pitch of my voice, and arrived in Tourgen in capital spirits. The people in the inn there were rude and saucy, so I politely said, "You be hanged! I shall go on," and taking out my map, I found that St. Gall was the nearest convenient place, and in fact the only practicable route. I could not succeed in persuading any one to go with me in such horrible weather, so I resolved to carry my own things, abusing all Swiss cordiality.

Shortly afterwards, however, came the reverse of the medal, which not unfrequently occurs. I went to the peasant who had brought my luggage here, and found him in his charming newly-built wooden house, and I had thus an opportunity of seeing a veritable and genuine Swiss interior, just as we imagine it to be. He and his whole family were sitting round a table, the house clean and warm, and the stove burning. The old man rose and gave me his hand, and insisted on my taking a seat; he then sent through the whole place to try to get me a carriage, or a man to carry my things, but as no one would either drive or walk,

he at last sent his own son with me. He only asked two *batzen* for carrying my knapsack for two hours. A very pretty fair daughter was sitting at the table sewing, the mother reading a thick book, and the old man himself studying the newspapers; it was a charming picture.

When at last I set off, the weather seemed to say, "Defiance is a game two can play at," for the storm broke loose with redoubled violence, and an invisible hand appeared to seize my umbrella at intervals, shaking it and crumpling it together, and my fingers were so benumbed that I could scarcely hold it fast; the paths were so desperately slippery that my guide fell sprawling full length before me in the mud; but what cared we? We *jodelled* and reviled the weather to our heart's content, and at last we passed the Nunnery, which we greeted by a serenade, and soon after reached St. Gallen.

Our journey was happily over, and yesterday I drove here, and at night met with a wonderful organ, on which I could play "Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele!" to my heart's content.

To-day I proceed to Memmingen, to-morrow to Augsburg; the day after, God willing, to Munich; and my Swiss tour is among the *have beens*. Perhaps I have rather bored you by all the trivial occurrences I have detailed. These are gloomy times, but we need not be so; and when I sent you my journal, it was chiefly to show you that I thought of you whenever I

was pleased and happy, and was with you in spirit. The shabby, dripping pedestrian bids you farewell, and a town gentlemen, with visiting-cards, fine linen, and a black coat, will write to you next time. Farewell.

FELIX.

BURGHER LETTER FROM MUNICH.

Munich, October 6th, 1831.

It is a delightful feeling to wake in the morning and to know that you are to score a grand allegro with all sorts of instruments, and various oboes and trumpets, while bright weather holds out the hope of a cheering long walk in the afternoon.

I have enjoyed these pleasures for a whole week past, so the favourable impression that Munich made on me during my first visit, is now very much enhanced. I scarcely know any place where I feel so comfortable and domesticated as here. It is indeed very delightful to be surrounded by cheerful faces, and your own to be so also, and to know every man you meet in the streets.

I am now preparing for my concert, so my hands are pretty full; my acquaintances every instant interrupting me in my work, the lovely weather tempting me to go out, and the copyists, in turn forcing me to stay at home; all this constitutes the most agreeable and exciting life. I was obliged to put off my concert,

on account of the October festival, which begins next Sunday, and lasts all the week. Every evening there is to be a performance at the theatre, and a ball, so all idea of an orchestra or a concert-room is out of the question. On Monday evening, however, the 17th, at half-past six, think of me,—for then we dash off with thirty violins, and two sets of wind instruments.

The first part begins with the symphony in C minor, the second with the "Midsummer Night's Dream." The first part closes with my new concerto in G minor, and at the end of the second I have unwillingly agreed to extemporize. Believe me I do so very reluctantly, but the people insist upon it. Bärmann has decided on playing again; Breiting, Mlle. Vial, Loehle, Bayer, and Pellegrini are the singers who are to execute a piece together. The locality is the large Odeon Hall, and the performance for the benefit of the poor of Munich. The magistrates invite the orchestra, and the burgomaster the singers. Every morning I am engaged in writing, correcting, and scoring till one o'clock, when I go to Scheidel's coffee-house in the Kaufinger Gasse, where I know each face by heart, and find the same people every day in the same position; two playing chess, three looking on, five reading the newspapers, six eating their dinner, and I am the seventh. After dinner Bärmann usually comes to fetch me, and we make arrangements about the concert, or after a walk we have cheese and beer, and then I return home and set to work again.

This time I have declined all invitations for the evening; but there are so many agreeable houses, to which I can go uninvited, that a light is seldom to be seen in my room on the parterre till after eight o'clock. You must know that I lodge on a level with the street, in a room which was once a shop, so that if I unbar the shutters of my glass door, one step brings me into the middle of the street, and any one passing along, can put his head in at the window, and say good morning. Next to me a Greek lodges, who is learning the piano, and he is truly odious; but to make up for that, my landlord's daughter, who wears a round silver cap and is very slender, looks all the prettier.

I have music in my rooms at four o'clock in the afternoon, three times every week: Bärmann, Breiting, Staudacher, young Poissl, and others, come regularly, and we have a musical picnic. In this way I become acquainted with operas, which, most unpardonably, I have not yet either heard or seen; such as Lodoiska, Faniska, Medea: also the Preciosa, Abu Hassan, etc. The theatre lends us the scores.

Last Wednesday we had capital fun; several wagers had been lost, and it was agreed that we should enjoy the fruits of them all together; and after various suggestions, we at last decided on having a musical soirée in my room, and to invite all the dignitaries; so a list was made out of about thirty persons; several also came uninvited, who were presented to us by mutual friends. There was a sad want of space; at first we

proposed placing several people on my bed, but it was surprising the number of patient sheep who managed to cram into my small room. The whole affair was most lively and successful. E—— was present, as dulcet as ever, languishing in all the ecstasy of poetic frenzy, and grey stockings; in short, tiresome beyond all description.

First I played my old quartet in B minor; then Breiting sang "Adelaide;" Herr S—— played variations on the violin (and a pretty mess he made of it); Bärmann performed Beethoven's first quartet (in F major), which he had arranged for two clarionets, Corno di Bassetto, and bassoon; an air from "Euryanthe" followed, which was furiously encored, and as a finale I extemporized—tried hard to get off—but they made such a tremendous uproar that *nolens* I was forced to comply, though I had not an idea in my head, beyond wine-glasses, benches, cold roast meat, and ham.

The Cornelius ladies were in the next room with my landlord and his family, listening; the Schauroths were making a visit on the first story for the same purpose, and even in the hall, and in the street, people were standing; in addition to all this, the heat of the crowded room, the deafening noise, the gay audience; and when at last the time for eating and drinking arrived, the uproar was at its height; we drank Bruderschaft,*

* Brotherhood—a manner of pledging one another, the parties linking together their arms which hold the glasses.

we gave toasts; the more formal guests with their grave faces, sat in the midst of the jovial throng, apparently quite contented, and we did not separate till half-past one in the morning.

The following evening formed a striking contrast. I was summoned to play before the Queen, and the Court; there all was proper and polite, and polished, and every time you moved your elbow, you pushed against an Excellency; the most smooth and complimentary phrases circulated in the room, and I, the *roturier*, stood in the midst of them, with my citizen heart, and my aching head! I managed however to get on pretty well, and at the end, I was commanded to extemporize on Royal themes, which I did, and was mightily commended; what pleased me most was, that when I had finished my extempore playing, the Queen said to me, that it was strange the power I possessed of carrying away my audience, for that during such music, no one could think of anything else; on which I begged to apologize for carrying away Her Majesty, etc.

This, you see, is the mode in which I pass my time in Munich. I forgot, however, to say, that every day at twelve o'clock, I give little Mademoiselle L—— an hour's instruction in double counterpoint, and four-part composition, etc., which makes me realize more than ever how stupid and confusing most masters and books on this subject are, and how clear the whole thing is when properly explained.

She is one of the sweetest creatures I ever saw. Imagine a small, delicate-looking, pale girl, with noble out not pretty features, so singular and interesting, that it is difficult to turn your eyes from her; while all her gestures and every word are full of genius. She has the gift of composing songs, and singing them in a way I never heard before, causing me the most unalloyed musical delight I ever experienced. When she is seated at the piano, and begins one of these songs, the sounds are quite unique; the music floats strangely to and fro, and every note expresses the most profound and refined feeling. When she sings the first note in her tender tones, every one present subsides into a quiet and thoughtful mood, and each, in his own way, is deeply affected.

If you could but hear her voice! so innocent, so unconsciously lovely, emanating from her inmost soul, and yet so tranquil! Last year the genius was all there; she had written no song that did not contain some bright flash of talent, and then M—— and I sounded forth her praises to the musical world; still no one seemed to place much faith in us; but since that time, she has made the most remarkable progress. Those who are not affected by her present singing, can have no feeling at all; but unluckily it is now the fashion to beg the young girl to sing her songs, and then the lights are removed from the piano, in order that the society may enjoy the plaintive strains.

This forms an unpleasant contrast, and repeatedly

when I was to have played something after her, I was quite unable, and declined doing so. Probably she may one day be spoiled by all this praise, because she has no one about her to comprehend or to guide her; and because, strangely enough, she is as yet entirely devoid of all musical cultivation; she knows very little, and can scarcely distinguish good music from bad; in fact, except her own pieces, she thinks all else that she hears wonderfully fine. If she were at length to become satisfied as it were with herself, it would be all over with her. I have, for my part, done what I could, and implored her parents and herself in the most urgent manner, to avoid society, and not to allow such divine genius to be wasted. Heaven grant that I may be successful! I may, perhaps, dear sisters, soon send you some of her songs that she has copied out for me, in token of her gratitude for my teaching her what she already knows from nature; and because I have really led her to good and solid music.

I also play on the organ every day for an hour, but unfortunately I cannot practise in the manner I wished as the pedal is short of five upper notes, so that I cannot play any of Sebastian Bach's passages on it; but the stops are wonderfully beautiful, by the aid of which you can vary chorals; so I dwell with delight on the celestial, liquid tone of the instrument. Moreover, Fanny, I have here discovered the particular stops which ought to be used in Sebastian Bach's "Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele." They seem actually made for this

melody, and sound so touching, that a tremor invariably seizes me, when I begin to play it. For the running accompaniment I have a flute stop of eight feet, and also a very soft one of four feet, which continually floats above the Choral. You have heard this effect in Berlin; but here there is a manual for the Choral with nothing but reed stops, so I use a mellow oboe and a soft clairon (four feet) and a viola; these give the Choral in subdued and touching tones, like distant human voices, singing from the depths of the heart.

Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, by the time you will have received this letter, I shall be on the Theresien Wiese, with eighty thousand other people; so think of me there, and farewell.

FELIX.

Munich, October 18th, 1831.

Dear Father,

Pray forgive me for not having written to you for so long. The last few days previous to my concert, were passed in such bustle and confusion, that I really had not a moment's leisure; besides I preferred writing to you after my concert was over, that I might tell you all about it, hence the long interval between this and my former letter.

I write to you in particular to-day, because it is so long since I have had a single line from you; I do beg you will soon write to me, if only to say that you are well, and to send me your kind wishes. You know this

always makes me glad and happy; therefore excuse my addressing this letter, with all the little details of my concert, to you. My mother, and sisters, were desirous to hear them, but I was anxious to say how eagerly I hope for a few lines from you. Pray let me have them. It is a long time since you wrote to me!

My concert took place yesterday, and was much more brilliant and successful than I expected. The affair went off well, and with much spirit. The orchestra played admirably, and the receipts for the benefit of the poor will be large. A few days after my former letter, I attended a full rehearsal, where the whole band were assembled, and in addition to the official notification the orchestra had received, I was obliged to invite them verbally in a polite speech, in the theatre. This, to me, was the most trying part of the whole concert; still I did not object to it, for I really wished to know the sensations of a man who gives a concert, and this ceremony forms part of it. I stationed myself therefore at the prompter's box, and addressed the performers very courteously, who took off their hats, and when my speech was finished, there was a general murmur of assent. On the following day there were upwards of seventy signatures to the circular. Immediately afterwards, I had the pleasure of finding that the chorus singers had sent one of their leaders to me, to ask if I had not composed some chorus that I should like to be given, in which case, they would all be happy to sing it *gratis*. Although I had decided not to give more

than three pieces of my composition, still the offer was very gratifying, and the hearty sympathy especially delighted me, for even the regimental musicians wnom I had to engage for the corni Inglesi and trumpets, positively refused to accept a single kreuzer, and we had above eighty performers in the orchestra.

Then came all the tiresome minor arrangements about advertisements, tickets, preliminary rehearsals, etc., and in addition to all this, it was the week of the October festival. In Munich the days and hours always glide past so very rapidly, that when they are gone, it really seems as if they had never been, and this is more peculiarly the case during this October festival. Every afternoon about three o'clock you repair to the spacious, green "Theresien Wiese," which is swarming with people, and it is impossible to get away till the evening, for every one finds acquaintances without end, and something to talk about, or to look at: a fat ox, target-shooting, a race, or pretty girls in gold and silver caps, etc. Any business in hand can be concluded there, for the whole town is congregated on the meadow, and not till the mists begin to rise, does the crowd disperse, and return towards the Frauenkirche. The people are in constant motion, running about in all directions, while the snowy mountains in the distance look clear and tranquil, each day giving promise of a bright morrow, and fulfilling their promise; and, what after all is the chief thing, none but careless happy faces are to be seen, with the occasional exception perhaps of a few Deputies, drink-

ing coffee in the open air, and discussing the lamentable condition of the people,—while the people themselves are standing round them looking as happy as possible. On the first day the King distributes the prizes himself, taking off his hat to each winner of a prize, shaking hands with the peasants, or laying hold of their arms and shaking them; now I think this all very proper, as here externally at least society appears more blended, but whether it sinks deep into the heart, we can discuss together at some future time. I adhere to my first opinion; but at all events it is so far well, that the absurd restraints of etiquette should not be too strictly observed outwardly, and so it is always something gained.

My first rehearsal took place early on Saturday. We had about thirty-two violins, six double-basses, and double sets of wind instruments, etc., but, Heaven knows why, the rehearsal went badly; my C minor symphony alone I was forced to rehearse for two hours. My concerto did not go at all satisfactorily. We had only time to play over the "Midsummer Night's Dream" once, and even then so hurriedly, that I wished to withdraw it from the bills: but Bärmann would not hear of this, and assured me that they would do it better next time. I therefore was forced to wait in considerable anxiety for the next rehearsal; in the meantime there was happily a great ball on Sunday evening, which was very enjoyable, so I recovered my spirits, and came next morning to the full rehearsal in high

good humour, and with perfect confidence. I started off at once with the overture; we played it over again and again, till at last it went well, and we did the same with my concerto, so that the whole rehearsal was quite satisfactory.

On my way to the concert at night, when I heard the rattling of the carriages, I began to feel real pleasure in the whole affair. The Court arrived at half-past six. I took up my little English *bâton*, and conducted my symphony. The orchestra played magnificently; and with a degree of fire and enthusiasm that I never heard equalled under my direction; they all crashed in at at the *forte*, and the *scherzo* was most light and delicate: it seemed to please the audience exceedingly, and the King was always the first to applaud. Then my fat friend, Breiting, sang the air in A flat major from "Euryanthe," and the public shouted "encore," and were in good humour, and showed good taste. Breiting was delighted, so he sang with spirit, and quite beautifully. Then came my concerto; I was received with long and loud applause; the orchestra accompanied me well, and the composition had dash enough, and gave much satisfaction to the audience; they wished to recall me, in order to give me another round of applause, according to the prevailing fashion here, but I was modest, and would not appear. Between the parts the King got hold of me, and praised me highly, asking all sorts of questions, and whether I was related to the Bartholdy in Rome, to whose house he was in

the habit of going, because it was the cradle of modern art, etc.*

The second part commenced with the "Midsummer Night's Dream," which went admirably, and excited a great sensation; then Bärmann played, and after that we had the finale in A major from Lodoiska. I however did not hear either of these, as I was resting and cooling in the anteroom. When I appeared to extemporize, I was again enthusiastically received. The King had given me the theme of "Non più andrai," on which I was to *improvise*. My former opinion is now fully confirmed, that it is an absurdity to extemporize in public. I have seldom felt so like a fool as when I took my place at the piano, to present to the public the fruits of my inspiration; but the audience were quite contented, and there was no end of their applause. They called me forward again, and the Queen said all that was courteous; but I was annoyed, for I was far from being satisfied with myself, and I am resolved never again to extemporize in public,—it is both an abuse and an absurdity.

So this is an account of my concert of the 17th, which is now among the things of the past. There were eleven hundred people present, so the poor may well be satisfied: but enough of all this. Farewell! May every happiness attend you all!

FELIX.

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* *Vide* the letter from Rome of the 1st of February, 1831.

Paris, December 19th, 1831.

Dear Father,

Receive my hearty thanks for your letter of the 7th. Though I do not quite apprehend and perhaps misinterpret your meaning on some points, still I have no doubt that this will come all right when we talk things over together, especially if you permit me, as you have always hitherto done, to express my opinion in a straightforward manner. I allude chiefly to your suggestion, that I should procure a libretto for an opera from some French poet, and then have it translated, and compose the music for the Munich stage.*

Above all, I must tell you how sincerely I regret that you have only now made known to me your views on this subject. I went to Düsseldorf, as you know, expressly to consult with Immermann on the point. I found him ready, and willing; he accepted the proposal, promising to send me the poem by the end of May at the latest, so I do not myself see how it is possible for me now to draw back; indeed I do not wish it, as I place entire confidence in him. I do not in the least understand what you allude to in your last letter, about Immermann, and his incapacity to write an opera. Although I by no means agree with you in this opinion, still it would have been my duty to have settled nothing without your express sanction, and I

* Felix Mendelssohn, during his stay in Munich, received a commission for an opera, from the management of the theatre there.

could have arranged the affair by letter from here; I believed however that I was acting quite to your satisfaction in making him my offer. In addition to this, some new poems that he read to me convinced me more than ever that he was a true poet; further, with an equal choice, I would always decide rather in favour of a German than a French libretto; and lastly, he has fixed on a subject which has been long in my thoughts, and which, if I am not mistaken, my mother wished to see made into an opera,—I mean Shakspeare's "Tempest;" I was therefore particularly pleased with this, so I shall doubly regret if you do not approve of what I have done. In any event, however, I entreat that you will neither be displeased with me, nor distrustful with regard to the work, nor cease to take any interest in it.

From what I know of Immermann, I feel assured I may expect a first-rate libretto. What I alluded to about his solitary life, merely referred to his inward feelings and perceptions; for in other respects he is well acquainted with what is passing in the world. He knows what people like, and what to give them; but above all, he is a genuine artist, which is the chief thing; but I am sure I need not say that I will not compose music for any words I do not consider really good, or which do not inspire me, and that any may do so, it is essential that I should have your approval. I intend to reflect deeply on the poem before I begin the music. The dramatic interest or (in the best sense) the theatrical portion, I shall of course immediately

communicate to you, and in short look on the affair in the serious light it deserves. The first step however is taken, and I cannot tell you how deeply I should regret your being dissatisfied.

There is however one thing which consoles me, and it is that if I were to rely on my own judgment, I would again act precisely as I have now done, though I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with a great deal of French poetry, and seeing it in the most favourable light. Pray pardon me for saying exactly what I think. To compose for the translation of a French libretto, seems to me for various reasons impracticable, and I have an idea that you are in favour of it more on account of the *success* which it is likely to enjoy than for its own *intrinsic merit*. Moreover I well remember how much you disliked the subject of the "Muette de Portici," a *Muette* too who had gone astray, and of "Wilhelm Tell," which the author seems almost purposely to have rendered tedious.

The success however these enjoy all over Germany does not assuredly depend on the works themselves being either good or dramatic, for "Tell" is neither, but on their coming from Paris, and having pleased there. Certainly there is *one* sure road to fame in Germany,—*viâ* Paris and London; still it is not the only one; this is proved not only by all Weber's works, but also by those of Spohr, whose "Faust" is here considered classical music, and which is to be given at the great Opera-house in London next season. Besides,

I could not possibly take that course, as my great opera has been bespoken for Munich, and I have accepted the commission. I am resolved therefore to make the attempt in Germany, and to live and work there so long as I can live there by my work, for this I consider my first duty. If I fail in this, then I must leave it for London or Paris, where it is easier to get on. I see indeed where I should be better remunerated and more honoured, and live more gaily, and at my ease, than in Germany, where a man must press forward, and toil and take no rest,—still, if I can succeed there, I prefer the latter.

None of the new libretti here, would in my opinion be attended with any success whatever, if brought out for the first time on a German stage. One of the distinctive characteristics of them all, is precisely of a nature that I should resolutely oppose, although the taste of the present day may demand it, and although I quite admit that it may in general be more prudent to go with the current than to struggle against it. I allude to that of immorality. In "Robert le Diable" the nuns come one after the other to allure the hero of the piece, till at last the abbess succeeds in doing so: the same hero is conveyed by magic into the apartment of her whom he loves, and casts her from him in an attitude which the public here applauds, and probably all Germany will do the same: she then implores his mercy in a grand aria. In another opera a young girl divests herself of her garments, and sings a song to the

effect that next day at this time she will be married; all this produces effect, but I have no music for such things. I consider it ignoble, so if the present epoch exacts this style, and considers it indispensable, then I will write oratorios.

Another strong reason why it would prove impracticable is that no French poet would undertake to furnish me with a poem. Indeed, it is no easy matter to procure one from them for this stage, for all the best authors are overwhelmed with commissions. At the same time I think it quite possible that I might succeed in getting one; still it never would occur to any of them to write a libretto for a *German* theatre. In the first place it would be much more feasible to give the opera here, and infinitely more rational too; in the second place, they would decline writing for any other stage than the French; for they can scarcely imagine the existence of any other. Above all, it would be impossible to procure for them a sum equivalent to what they receive here from the theatres, and what they draw as their share from the *part d'auteur*.

I know you will forgive me for having told you my opinion without reserve. You always allowed me to do so in conversation, so I hope you will not put a wrong construction on what I have written, and I beg you will amend my views by communicating your own. —Your

FELIX.

Paris, December 20th, 1831.

Dear Rebecca,

I went yesterday to the Chambre des Députés, and I must now tell you about it; but what do you care about the Chambre des Députés? It is a political song, and you would rather hear whether I have composed any love songs, or bridal songs, or wedding songs; but it is a sad pity, that no songs but political ones are composed here. I believe I never in my life passed any such unmusical week as this. I feel as if I never could again think of composing; this all arises from the "juste milieu;" but it is still worse to be with musicians, for they do not *wrangle* about politics, but *lament* over them. One has lost his place, another his title, a third his money, and they say this all proceeds from the "Milieu."

Yesterday I saw the "Milieu;" it had on a light grey coat, looked very fashionable, and sat in the first place on the Ministerial bench. It was sharply attacked by M. Mauguin, who has a very long nose. Of course you don't care for all this; but what of that? I must have a chat with you. In Italy I was lazy, in Switzerland rollicking, in Munich a consumer of cheese and beer, and so in Paris I must be a politician. I intended to have composed several symphonies, and to have written songs for various ladies in Frankfort, Düsseldorf, and Berlin; but as yet not a chance of it. Paris obtrudes herself, and as above all things I must now see Paris, so I am busily engaged in seeing it, and am dumb.

Moreover I am freezing with cold,—another drawback. I cannot contrive to make my room warm, and I am not to get another and warmer apartment, till New Year's Day. In a dark little hole on the ground floor, overlooking a small damp garden, where my feet are like ice, how can I possibly write music? It is bitterly cold, and an Italian like myself is peculiarly susceptible. At this moment a man outside my window is singing a political song to a guitar.

I live a reckless life—out morning, noon, and night: to-day at Baillot's; to-morrow I go to some friends of the Bigots'; the next day, Valentin; Monday, Fould; Tuesday, Hiller; Wednesday, Gérard; and last week it was just the same. In the forenoon I rush off to the Louvre, and gaze at the Raphaels, and my favourite Titian; a person might well wish for a dozen more eyes to look at such a picture.

Yesterday I was in the Chamber of Peers, who were engaged in pronouncing judgment on their own hereditary rights, and I saw M. Pasquier's wig. The day before I paid two musical visits, to the grumbling Cherubini, and the kind Herz. There is a large sign-board before the house: "Manufacture de Pianos, par Henri Herz, Marchand de Modes et de Nouveautés." I thought this formed one, not observing that it was a notice of two different firms, so I entered below, and plunged into the midst of gauze, and lace, and trimmings: so, rather abashed, I asked where the pianos were. A number of Herz's fair scholars with industrious faces, were

waiting upstairs. I sat down by the fire and read your interesting account of my father's birth-day, and so forth. Herz presently arrived, and gave audience to his pupils. We were very loving, recalled old times, and besprinkled each other mutually with great praise. On his pianos is inscribed: "Médaille d'or. Exposition de 1827." This was very imposing.

From thence I went to Erard's, where I tried over his instruments, and remarked written on them in large letters: "Médaille d'or. Exposition de 1827." My respect seemed to diminish. When I went home I opened my own instrument by Pleyel, and to be sure there also I saw in large letters: "Médaille d'or. Exposition de 1827." The matter is like the title of "Hofrath," but it is characteristic. It is alleged that the chambers are about to discuss the following proposition: "Tous les Français du sexe masculin ont dès leur naissance le droit de porter l'ordre de la Légion d'Honneur;" and the permission to appear without the order, can only be obtained by special services. You really scarcely see a man in the street without a bit of coloured ribbon, so it is no longer a distinction.

Apropos, shall I be lithographed full length? Answer what you will, I don't intend to do it. One afternoon in Berlin, when I was standing *unter den Linden* before Schenk's shop looking at H——'s and W——'s lithographs, I registered a solemn vow, unheard by man, that I would never allow myself to be hung up till I became a great man. The temptation in Munich was

strong, where they wished to drape me with a Carbonaro cloak, a stormy sky in the background, and my facsimile underneath, but I happily got off by adhering to my principles. Here again I am rather tempted, for the likenesses are very striking, but I keep my vow; and if, after all, I never do become a great man, though posterity will be deprived of a portrait, it will have an absurdity the less.

It is now the 24th, and we had a very pleasant evening at Baillot's yesterday. He plays beautifully, and had collected a very musical society of attentive ladies and enthusiastic gentlemen, and I have seldom been so well amused in any circle, or enjoyed such honours. It was the greatest possible delight to me to hear my quartet in E flat major (dedicated to B. P.) performed in Paris by Baillot's quartet, and they executed it with fire and spirit. They commenced with a quintet by Bocherini, an old-fashioned *perruque*, but a very amiable old gentleman underneath it. The company then asked for a sonata of Bach's; we selected the one in A major; old familiar tones dawned once more on me, of the time when Baillot played it with Madame Bigot.* We urged each other on, the affair became animated, and so thoroughly amused both us and our audience, that we immediately commenced the one in E major, and next time we mean to introduce the four others.

Then my turn came to play a solo. I was in the vein

* The lady who instructed Mendelssohn in the piano in Paris, when the family resided there for a time in 1816.

to extemporize successfully, and felt that I did so. The guests being now in a graver mood, I took three themes from the previous sonatas, and worked them up to my heart's content; it seemed to give immense pleasure to those present, for they shouted and applauded like mad. Then Baillot gave my quartet; his manner towards me has something very kind, and I was doubly pleased, as he is rather cold at first and seldom makes advances to any one. He appears a good deal depressed by the loss of his situation. I saw a number of old well-known faces, and they asked after you all, and recalled many anecdotes of that former period.

When I was passing through Louvain two winters ago with my "Liederspiel" in my head, and my injured knee,* I seized the brass handle of a pump to prevent myself from falling; and when I returned this year in the same miserable diligence, driven by just such a pig-tailed postilion, the "Liederspiel," my knee, and Italy, were all things of the past; and yet the handle of the pump was still hanging there, as clean and brightly rubbed up as ever, having survived 1830, and all the revolutionary storms, and remaining quite unchanged. This is sentimental; my father must not read it, for it is the old story of the past and the present, which we discussed so eagerly one fine evening, and which recurs to me among the crowd here at every step. I thought of it at the Madeleine, and when I went to aunt J-——'s,

* Mendelssohn had been thrown out of a cabriolet in London in 1829, and his knee seriously injured.

and at the Hôtel des Princes, and at the gallery, which my father showed me fifteen years ago, and when I saw the coloured signs, which at that time impressed me exceedingly, and are now grown brown and shabby.

Moreover this is Christmas Eve; but I feel little interest in it, or in New Year's Night either. Please God, another year may wear a very different aspect, and I will not then go to the theatre on Christmas Eve, as I am about to do to-night, to hear Lablache and Rossini for the first time. How little I care about it! I should much prefer nut-crackers and apples to-day, and I think it very doubtful whether the orchestra will play anything as pretty as my "Kinder Sinfonie."* I must be content, however. I am now modulating into the minor key, a fault with which the "École Allemande" are often reproached, and as I profess not to belong to the latter, the French say I am *cosmopolite*. Heaven defend me from being anything of the kind!

And now good-bye; a thousand compliments from Bertin de Vaux, Girod de l'Ain, Dupont de l'Eure, Tracy, Sacy, Passy and other kind friends. I had intended to have told you in this letter how Salverte attacked the Ministers, while a little *émeute* was going on on the Pont Neuf; how I sat in the Chambers along with Franck, in the midst of St. Simoniens; how witty Dupin was; but no more at present. May you all be well and happy this evening, and thinking of me!

FELIX.

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* A "Kinder-Sinfonie," composed by Mendelssohn in the year 1829, for a Christmas family fête.

Paris, December 28th, 1831.

Dear Madam Fanny,

For three months past I have been thinking of writing you a musician's letter, but my procrastination brings its own punishment, for having been a fortnight here, I doubt my being able to do so at all. I have been in every possible mood here; in that of an inquiring, admiring traveller; a dandy; a Frenchman, and yesterday actually a Peer of France; but not yet a musician. Indeed there is little likelihood of the latter, for the aspect of music here is miserable enough.

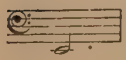
The concerts in the Conservatoire, which were my great object, probably will not take place at all, because the Commission of the Ministry wished to give a Commission to the Commission of the society, to deprive a Commission of Professors of their share of the profits; on which the Commission of the Conservatoire replied to the Commission of the Ministry, that they might go and be hanged (suspended), and even then they would not agree to it. The newspapers make some very severe comments on this, but you need not read them, as these papers are prohibited in Berlin; but you don't lose much by this. The Opéra Comique is bankrupt, and so it has had vacation since I came; at the Great Opera, they only give little ones, which amuse me, though they neither provoke nor excite me. "Armida" was the last great opera, but they gave it in three acts, and this was two years ago. Choron's "Institut" is closed,

the "Chapelle Royale" is gone out like a light; not a single Mass is to be heard on Sundays in all Paris, unless accompanied by serpents. Malibran is to appear here next week for the last time. So much the better, say you: retire within yourself, and write music for "Ach Gott vom Himmel," or a symphony, or the new violin quartet which you mentioned in your letter to me of the 28th, or any other serious composition; but this is even more impossible, for what is going on here is most deeply interesting, and entices you out, suggesting matter for thought and memory, and absorbing every moment of time. Accordingly I was yesterday in the Chambre des Pairs, and helped to count the votes, destined to abolish a very ancient privilege; immediately afterwards I hurried off to the Théâtre Français, where Mars was to appear for the first time for a year past; (she is fascinating beyond conception; a voice that we shall never hear equalled, causing you to weep, and yet to feel pleasure in doing so). To-day I must see Taglioni again, who along with Mars constitutes two Graces (if I find the third in my travels, I shall marry her), and afterwards I had to go to Gerard's classical *salon*. In the same way I lately went to hear Lablache and Rubini, after hearing Odillon Barrot wrangle with the Ministry. After seeing the pictures in the Louvre in the morning, I went to Baillot's; so what chance is there of living in retirement? The outer world is too tempting.

There are moments, however, when my thoughts

turn inwards—such as on Christmas Eve, when Lablache sang so beautifully, or on Christmas-day, when there were no bells and no festivities, or when Paul's letter came from London, inviting me to visit him next spring; the said spring to be passed in England. Then I feel that all that now interests me is merely superficial: that I am neither a politician, nor a dancer, nor an actor, nor a *bel esprit,* but a *musician,*—so I take courage, and am now writing a professional letter to my dear sister.

My conscience smote me, especially when I read about your new music that you so carefully conducted on my father's birthday, and I reproached myself for not having said a single word to you about your previous composition; but I cannot let you off that, my colleague! What the deuce made you think of setting your G horns so high? Did you ever hear a G horn take the high G without a squeak? I only put this to yourself! and at the end of the introduction, when wind instruments come in, ought not the following note



to come in, and do not these deep oboes in the same passage growl away all pastoral feeling, and all bloom? Do you not know that you ought to take out a licence to sanction your writing the low B for oboes, and that it is only permitted on particular emergencies, such as witches, or some great grief? Has not the composer evidently, in the A major air, overloaded

the voice by too many instrumental parts, so that the delicate intention, and the lovely melody of this otherwise charming piece, with all its beauties, are quite obscured and marred.

To speak seriously, however, this aria is very beautiful, and particularly fascinating. But I have a remark to make about your two choruses, which indeed applies rather to the text than to you. These two choruses are not sufficiently original. This sounds absurd; but my opinion is that it is the fault of the words, that express nothing original; one single expression might have improved the whole, but as they now stand, they would be equally suitable for church music, a cantata, an offertorium, etc. Where, however, they are not commonplace, as for example, in the lament at the end, they seem to me sentimental and not natural. The words of the last chorus are too material ("mit dem kraftlosen Mund, und der sich regenden Zunge"). At the beginning of the aria alone, are the words vigorous and spirited, and from them emanated the whole of your lovely piece of music. The music of the choruses is of course good, for it is written by you; but in the first place, it seems to me that it might be by any other good master, and secondly, as if it were not *necessarily* what it is, indeed as if it might have been *differently* composed. This arises from the poetry not demanding any particular music. I know that this is often the fault of my own compositions; but though I am fully aware of the beam in my own eyes, I would fain extract the

mote from yours, to relieve you at once from its pressure.

My *résumé* therefore is, that I would advise you to be more cautious in the choice of your words, because, after all, it is not everything in the Bible, even if it suits the theme, that is suggestive of *music;* but you have probably obviated these objections of mine in your new cantata, before being aware of them, in which case, I might as well have said nothing. So much the better if it be so, and then you can prosecute me for defamation! So far as your music and composition are concerned, they quite suit my taste; the young lady's cloven foot nowhere peeps forth, and if I knew any *kapellmeister* capable of writing such music, I would give him a place at my court. Fortunately I know no such person, and there is no occasion to place you at my right hand *at court,* as you are there already.*

When do you mean to send me something new to cheer me? Pray do so soon! As far as regards myself, shortly after my arrival here, I had one of those attacks of musical spleen, when all music, and more especially one's own, becomes actually hateful. I felt thoroughly unmusical, and did nothing but eat and sleep, and that revived me. F——, to whom I complained of my state, instantly constructed a musical theory on the subject, proving that it could not be otherwise; I however think exactly the reverse; but though we are so entirely dis-

* A play upon Fanny Hensel's address, in a court—No. 3, Leipziger Strasse.

similar, and have as many differences as a Bushman and Caffre, still we like each other exceedingly.

With L——, too, I get on famously. He is very pleasing, and the most *dilettante* of all the *dilettanti* I ever met. He knows everything by heart, and plays wrong basses to them all; he is only deficient in arrogance, for with all his undeniable talent, he is very modest and retiring. I am much with him, because he is a benevolent, kind-hearted man; we should thoroughly agree on all points, if he would not consider me a *doctrinaire,* and persist in talking politics (a subject that I wish to avoid for at least a hundred and twenty reasons; first of all, because I don't in the least understand it); besides, he delights in hitting at Germany, and in depreciating London in favour of Paris. Both these things are prejudicial to my *constitution,* and whoever assails that, I must defend it and dispute with him.

I was yesterday studying your new music, and enjoying it, when Kalkbrenner came in, and played various new compositions. The man is become quite romantic, purloins themes, ideas, and similar trifles, from Hiller, writes pieces in F sharp minor, practises every day for several hours, and is as he always was, a knowing fellow. Every time I see him, he inquires after "my charming sister, whom he likes so much, and who has such a fine talent for playing and composing." My invariable reply is, that she has not given up music, that she is very industrious, and that I love her very much; which is all true. And now farewell, dear

sister. May you be well and happy, may we soon meet, and a happy New Year to you!

FELIX.

TO CARL IMMERMANN, IN DÜSSELDORF.

Paris, January 11th, 1832.

You permitted me to give you occasional tidings of myself, and since I came here, I have daily intended to do so; the excitement here is however so great, that till to-day I have never been able to write. When I contrast this constant whirl and commotion, and the thousand distractions among a foreign people, with your house in the garden, and your warm winter room, your wish to exchange with me and to come here in my place, often recurs to me, and I almost wish I had taken you at your word. You must indeed in that case have remained all the same in your winter room, so that I might come out to you through the snow, take my usual place in the corner, and listen to the "Schwanritter;" for there is more life in it than in all the tumult here.

In a word, I rejoice at the prospect of my return to Germany; everything there is indeed on a small scale, and homely, if you will, but *men* live there; men who know what art really is, who do not admire, nor praise, in fact who do not *criticize*, but *create*. You do not admit this, but it is only because you are yourself among the number.

I beg you will not however think that I am like one of those German youths with long hair, who lounge about languidly, and pronounce the French superficial, and Paris frivolous. I only say all this because I now thoroughly enjoy and admire Paris, and am becoming better acquainted with it, and only say it when I am writing to you in Düsseldorf. I have, on the contrary, cast myself headlong into the vortex, and do nothing the whole day but see new objects, the Chambers of Peers and Deputies, pictures and theatres, dio- neo- cosmo- and panoramas, constant parties, etc. Moreover, the musicians here are as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore, all hating each other; so each must be individually visited, and wary diplomacy is advisable, for they are all gossips, and what one says to another, the whole corps know next morning.

The days have thus flown past hitherto as if only half as long as they were in reality, and as yet I have not been able to compose a single bar; in a few days, however, this exotic life will cease. My head is now dizzy from all I have seen and wondered at; but I then intend to collect my thoughts, and set to work, when I shall feel once more happy and at home. I like best going to the little theatres in the evening, because there French life and the French people are truly mirrored; the "Gymnase Dramatique" is my particular favourite, where nothing is given but small *vaudevilles*. The extreme bitterness, and deep animosity which pervade all these little comedies, are most

remarkable, and although partially cloaked by the prettiest phrases, and the most lively acting, become only the more conspicuous. Politics everywhere play the chief part, which might have sufficed to make me dislike these theatres, for we have enough of them *elsewhere;* but the politics of the "Gymnase" are of a light and ironical description,—referring to the occurrences of the day, and to the newspapers, in order to excite laughter and applause, and at last you can't help laughing and applauding with the rest. Politics and sensuality are the two centres of interest, round which everything circles; and in the many pieces I have seen, an attack on the Ministry, and a scene of seduction, were never absent.

The whole style of the *vaudeville,* introducing certain conventional music at the end of the scene in every piece, when the actors partly sing and partly declaim some couplets with a witty point, is thoroughly French; we could never learn this, nor in fact wish to do so, for this mode of connecting the wit of the day with an established *refrain,* does not exist in our conversation, nor in our ideas. I cannot imagine anything more striking and effective, nor yet more prosaic.

A great sensation has been recently caused here, by a new piece at the Gymnase, "Le Luthier de Lisbonne," which forms the delight of the public. A stranger is announced in the play-bills; scarcely does he appear when all the audience begin to laugh and to applaud, and you learn that the actor is a close imitation of Don

Miguel, in gestures, manner, and costume; he proceeds to announce that he is a king, and the fortune of the piece is made. The more stupid, uncivilized, and uncouth, the Unknown appears, the greater is the enjoyment of the public, who allow none of his gestures or speeches to pass unobserved. He takes refuge from a riot in the house of this instrument maker, who is the most devoted of all royalists, but unluckily the husband of a very pretty woman. One of Don Miguel's favourites has forced her to grant him a rendezvous for the ensuing night, and he begs the king—who arrives at this moment—to give him his aid, by causing the husband to be beheaded. Don Miguel replies, "Très volontiers," and while the Luthier recognizes him, and falls at his feet, beside himself from joy, Don Miguel signs his death-warrant, but also that of his favourite, whom he means to replace with the pretty wife. At each enormity that he commits, we laugh and applaud, and are immensely delighted with this stupid stage Don Miguel. So ends the first act. In the second, it is supposed to be midnight; the pretty wife alone and anxious. Don Miguel climbs in at the window, and does all in his power to gain her favour, making her dance and sing to him, but she cannot endure him, and falls at his feet, imploring him to spare her; on which he seizes her, and drags her about the stage, and if she did not make a snatch at a knife, and then a sudden knocking ensue, she might have been in a bad plight; at the close, the worthy Luthier rescues the

king from the hands of the French soldiery, who are just arrived, and of whose valour, and love of liberty, he has a great horror. So the piece ends happily.

A little comedy followed, where the wife betrays her husband, and has a lover; and another, where the man is faithless to his wife, and is maintained by his mistress; this is succeeded by a satire on the new constructions in the Tuileries, and on the Ministry, and so it goes on.

I cannot say how it may be at the French Opera, for it is bankrupt, so there has been no acting there since I came. In the Académie Royale, however, Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable" is played every night with great success: the house is always crowded, and the music has given general satisfaction. There is an expenditure of all possible means of producing stage effect that I never saw equalled on any stage. All who can sing, dance, or act in Paris, sing, dance, and act on this occasion.

The *sujet* is romantic; that is, the devil appears in the piece—(this is quite sufficient romance and imagination for the Parisians). It is however very bad; and were it not for two brilliant seduction scenes, it would produce no effect whatever. The devil is a poor devil, and appears in armour, for the purpose of leading astray his son Robert, a Norman knight, who loves a Sicilian princess. He succeeds in inducing him to stake his money and all his personal property (that is, his sword) at dice, and then makes him commit sacrilege, giving him a magic branch, which enables him to penetrate into the Princess's apartment, and renders him irre-

sistible. All this the son does with perfect willingness; but when at the end he is to assign himself by bond to his father, who declares that he loves him, and cannot live without him, the devil, or rather the poet Scribe, introduces a peasant girl, who has in her possession a testament which had belonged to Robert's deceased mother, which she reads to him, and so shakes his resolve that the devil is obliged to sink down through a trap-door at midnight, with his purpose unfulfilled, on which Robert marries the Princess, and the peasant girl, it seems, is intended to represent the principle of good. The devil is called Bertram.

I cannot imagine how any music could be composed on such a cold, formal *extravaganza* as this, and so the opera does not satisfy me. It is throughout frigid and heartless; and where this is the case it produces no effect on me. The people extol the music, but where warmth and truth are wanting, I have no test to apply.

Michael Beer set off to-day for Havre. It seems he intends to compose poetry there; and I now remember that when I met you one day at Schadow's, and maintained that he was no poet, your rejoinder was, "That is a matter of taste." I seldom see Heine, because he is entirely absorbed in liberal ideas and in politics. He has recently published sixty "Frühlings Lieder." Very few of them seem to me either animated or truthful, but those few are splendid. Have you read them? They appeared in the second volume of the "Reisebilder." Börne intends to publish some new volumes of letters:

he and I are full of enthusiasm for Malibran and Taglioni; all these gentlemen are abusing and reviling Germany and all that is German, and yet they cannot speak even tolerable French; I think this rather provoking.

Pray excuse my having sent you so much gossip, and consequently having to write on the margin of my paper; but it is long since we met: and as for a time I could see you every day, it has become quite a necessity to write to you; so you must not take it amiss. You once promised to send me a few lines in reply: I don't know whether I may venture to remind you of this, but I should really be glad to hear how you pass your time, and what novelty a certain cupboard in the corner contains; how you get on with "Merlin," and my "Schwanritter," the sound of which still vibrates in my ears like sweet music; and also whether you sometimes think of me, and of next May, and "The Tempest." It is certainly expecting a good deal to ask you for an early reply to my letter, but fearing that you may have enough of the first to prevent your provoking a second, I therefore take courage, and began an answer to this. But I need not have asked this, for you used to guess my wishes before I could utter them; and if you are as kindly disposed towards me now as you were then, you will fulfil this desire of mine as you did all the others.—Yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

Paris, January 14th, 1832.

I now first begin to feel at home here, and really to know Paris; it is indeed the most singular and amusing place imaginable; but for one who is no politician, it does not possess so much interest. So I have become a *doctrinaire*. I read my newspaper every morning, form my own opinion about peace and war, and, only among friends, confess that I know nothing of the matter.

This is however not the case with F——, who is completely absorbed in the vortex of dilettantism and dogmatism, and really believes himself quite adapted to be a Minister. It is a sad pity, for nothing good will ever come of it. He has sufficient sense to be always busy, but not enough to have any business. He is a *dilettante* on all points, and can criticize everything, but create nothing. We continue on the same intimate terms, meeting every day, and liking each other's society, but inwardly we remain strangers. I suspect that he writes for the public papers; he is very much with Heine, and chatters abuse against Germany like a magpie; all this I much dislike, and as I really have a sincere regard for him, it worries me. I suppose I must try to become accustomed to it, but it is really too sad to know where a person is deficient, and yet to be unable to remedy his defects. Moreover he grows visibly older; so this irregular, unoccupied life is the less suitable for him.

A—— has left his parents' house, and gone to the

Rue Monsigny,* where body and soul are equally engrossed. I have in my possession an appeal to mankind from P——, in which he makes his confession of faith, and invites every one to surrender a share of his property, however small, to the St. Simoniens; calling on all artists to devote their genius in future to this religion; to compose better music than Rossini or Beethoven; to build temples of peace, and to paint like Raphael or David. I have twenty copies of this pamphlet, which P—— desired me, dear Father, to send to you. I rest satisfied by sending you *one*, which you will find quite enough, and even that one, by some private hand of course.

It is a bad sign of the state of the public mind here, that such a monstrous doctrine, in such detestable prose, should ever have arisen, or gained ground to any extent; for it appears that the students of the Polytechnic School take considerable interest in it. It is difficult to say how far it may be carried, when there is temptation offered on every side, promising honour to one, fame to another; to me, an admiring public, and to the poor, money; while by their cold estimate of talent, they check all effort, and all progress. And then their ideas of universal philanthropy, of disbelief in hell, and the devil, and eternal perdition, and of the annihilation of selfishness, ideas which in our country spring from nature, and are to be found all over Christendom, and without which I should not wish to live, they parade as

* At that time the residence of the St. Simoniens.

a new invention and discovery, constantly repeating that they mean to transform the world, and to render mankind happy. A—— coolly tells me that he does not require to improve himself, but others only; because he is not at all imperfect, but, on the contrary, perfect. They not only praise and compliment each other, but all those whom they wish to gain over; extolling any talent or capability you may possess, and lamenting that such great powers should be lost, by adhering to the old-fashioned notions of duty, vocation, and action, as they were formerly interpreted. When I listen to all this, it does seem to me a melancholy mystification. I attended a meeting last Sunday where all the Fathers sat in a circle: then came the principal Father and demanded their reports, praising and blaming them, addressing the assembly, and issuing his commands; to me it was quite awful! He also has completely renounced his parents, and lives with the Fathers, his disciples, for whom he is endeavouring to negotiate a loan; but enough of this subject!

A Pole gives a concert next week, where I am to play in a composition for six performers, along with Kalkbrenner, Hiller, and Co.; do not be surprised therefore if you see my name mutilated, as in the "Messager" lately, when the death of Professor Flegel* (Hegel) was announced from Berlin, and all the papers copied it.

I have set to work again, and live most agreeably.

* *Flegel* signifies "a scamp."

I have not yet been able to write to you about the theatres, although they occupy me very much. How unmistakable are the symptoms of bitterness and excitement even in the most insignificant farce; how invariably everything bears a reference to politics; how completely what is called the Romantic School has infected all the Parisians, for they think of nothing on the stage now but the plague, the gallows, the devil, etc., one striving to outdo the other in horrors, and in liberalism; in the midst of these *misères* and fooleries, how charming is a talent like that of Léontine Fay, who is the perfection of grace and fascination, and remains unsullied by the absurdities she is compelled to utter and to act. How strange all these contrasts are! but this I reserve for future discussion.

FELIX.

Paris, January 21st, 1832.

In every letter of yours I receive a little hit, for the unpunctuality of my answers, and so I now reply without delay to your questions, dear Fanny, with regard to the new works that I am about to publish.

It occurred to me that the octett and the quintett might make a very good appearance among my works, being in fact better than many compositions that already figure there. As the publication of these pieces costs me nothing, but, on the contrary, I derive profit from them, and as I do not wish to confuse their chrono-

logical order, my idea is to publish the following pieces at Easter:—quintett and octett (the latter also arranged as a duet), "Midsummer Night's Dream," seven songs without words, six songs with words; on my return to Germany, six pieces of sacred music, and finally, if I can get any one to print and pay for it, the symphony in D minor. As soon as I have performed "Meeresstille" at my concert in Berlin, it will also appear. I cannot however bring out "The Hebrides" here, because, as I wrote to you at the time, I do not consider it finished; the middle movement forte in D major is very stupid, and the whole modulations savour more of counterpoint, than of train oil and seagulls and salt fish—and it ought to be exactly the reverse. I like the piece too well to allow it to be performed in an imperfect state, and I hope soon to be able to work at it, and to have it ready for England, and the Michaelmas fair at Leipzig.

You inquire also why I do not compose the Italian symphony in A major. Because I am composing the Saxon overture in A minor, which is to precede the "Walpurgis Night," that the work may be played with all due honour at the said Berlin concert, and elsewhere.

You wish me to remove to the Marais, and to write the whole day. My dear child, that would never do; I have, at the most, only the prospect of three more months to see Paris, so I must throw myself into the stream; indeed, this is why I came; everything here is

too bright, and too attractive to be neglected; it rounds off my pleasant travelling reminiscences, and forms a fine colossal key-stone, and so I consider that to see Paris is at this moment my chief vocation. The publishers too are standing on each side of me like veritable Satans, demanding music for the piano, and offering to pay for it. By Heavens! I don't know whether I shall be able to withstand this, or write some kind of trio; for I hope you believe me to be superior to the temptation of a *pot pourri;* but I should like to compose a couple of good trios.

On Thursday the first rehearsal of my overture takes place, which is to be performed in the second concert at the "Conservatoire." In the third, my symphony in D minor is to follow. Habeneck talks of seven or eight rehearsals, which will be very welcome to me. Moreover I am also to play something at Érard's concert; so I shall play my Munich concerto, but I must first practise it well. Then, a note is lying beside me, "Le Président du Conseil, Ministre de l'Intérieur, et Madame Casimir Périer prient," etc., on Monday evening to a ball; this evening there is to be music at Habeneck's; to-morrow at Schlesinger's; Tuesday, the first public *soirée* at Baillot's; on Wednesday, Hiller plays his Concerto in the Hôtel de Ville, and all these things last till past midnight. Let those who like it, lead a solitary life! these are all things that cannot be refused. So when am I to compose? In the forenoon? Yesterday, first Hiller came, then Kalkbrenner, then Haben-

eck. The day before that, came Baillot, Eichthal, and Rodrigues. Perhaps very early in the morning? Well, I do compose then—so you are confuted!

P—— was with me yesterday, talking St. Simonienism, and either from a conviction of my stupidity, or my shrewdness, he made me disclosures which enraged me so much, that I resolved never again to go either to him or to his confederates. Early this morning Hiller rushed in, and told me he had just witnessed the arrest of the St. Simoniens. He wished to hear their orations; but the Fathers did not come. All of a sudden soldiers made their way in, and requested those present to disperse as quickly as possible, inasmuch as M. Enfantin and the others had been arrested in the Rue Monsigny. A party of National Guards are placed in the street, and other soldiers marched up there; everything is sealed up, and now the *procès* will begin. My B minor quartett, which is lying in the Rue Monsigny, is also sealed up. The adagio alone is in the style of the "juste milieu," all the other parts *mouvement*. I suppose I shall eventually be obliged to play it before a jury.

I was lately standing beside the Abbé Bardin at a large party, listening to the performance of my quartett in A minor. At the last movement my neighbour pulled my coat, and said "Il a cela dans une de ses sinfonies." "Qui?" said I, rather embarrassed. "Beethoven, l'auteur de ce quatuor," said he, with a consequential air. This was bitter sweet! but is it not famous

that my quartetts should be played in the classes of the Conservatoire, and that the pupils there are practising off their fingers to play "Ist es wahr?"

I have just come from St. Sulpice, where the organist showed off his organ to me; it sounded like a full chorus of old women's voices; but they maintain that it is the finest organ in Europe, if it were only put into proper order, which would cost thirty thousand francs. The effect of the *canto fermo*, accompanied by a serpent stop, those who have not heard it could scarcely conceive, and clumsy bells are ringing all the time.

The post is going, so I must conclude my gossip, or I might go on in this manner till the day after to-morrow. I have not yet told you that Bach's "Passion" is announced for performance in London, at Easter, in the Italian Opera House.—Yours,

FELIX.

Paris, February 4th, 1832.

You will, I am sure, excuse my writing you only a few words to-day: it was but yesterday that I heard of my irreparable loss.* Many hopes, and a pleasant bright period of my life have departed with him, and I never again can feel so happy. I must now set about forming new plans, and building fresh castles in the air; the former ones are irrevocably gone, for he was interwoven

* The death of his friend Edward Rietz, the violin player.

with them all. As I shall never be able to think of my boyish days, nor of the ensuing ones, without connecting him with them, so I had hoped, till now, that it might be the same with those to come. I must endeavour to inure myself to this, but the fact that I can recall no one thing without being reminded of him, that I shall never hear music, or write it, without thinking of him, doubles the sorrow of such a separation. The former days are now indeed departed, but it is not those alone that I lose, but also the man I so sincerely loved. Had I never had any, or had I lost all cause for loving him, I must without a cause have loved him all the same. He loved me too, and the knowledge that there was such a man in the world—one on whom I could rely, who lived to love me, and whose wishes and aims were identical with my own—this is all over: it is the hardest blow that has yet befallen me, and never shall I forget it.

This was the celebration of my birthday. When I was listening to Baillot on Tuesday, and said to Hiller that I only knew one violinist who could play the music I loved for me, L—— was standing beside me, and knew what had happened, but did not give me the letter. He was not aware indeed that yesterday was my birthday, but he broke it to me by degrees yesterday morning, and then I recalled previous anniversaries, and took a review of the past, as every one should on his birthday; I remembered how invariably on this day he arrived with some special gift which he had long

thought of, and which was always as pleasing and agreeable, and welcome as himself. My day was very sad; I could neither do anything, nor think of anything, but the one subject.

To-day I have compelled myself to work, and succeeded. My overture in A minor is finished. I think of writing some pieces here, which will be well remunerated.

I beg you will tell me every particular about him, and every detail, no matter how trifling; it will be a comfort to me to hear of him once more. The octett parts, so neatly copied by him, are lying before me at this moment, and remind me of him. I hope shortly to recover my usual spirits, and to be able to write to you cheerfully and more at length. A new chapter in my life has begun, but as yet it has no title.—Your

FELIX.

Paris, February 13th, 1832.

I am now leading a quiet, pleasant life here; neither my present frame of mind, nor the pleasures of society, tempt me to enter into gaiety. Here, and indeed everywhere else, society is uninteresting, and not improving, and, owing to the late hours, monopolizing a great deal of time. I do not refuse, however, when there is to be good music. I will write all particulars to Zelter of the first concert in the Conservatoire. The performers there play quite admirably, and in so

finished a style, that it is indeed a pleasure to hear them; they delight in it themselves, and each takes the greatest possible trouble; the leader is an energetic, experienced musician, so they cannot fail to go well together.

To-morrow my A minor quartett is to be performed in public. Cherubini says of Beethoven's later music, "Ça me fait éternuer," and so I think it probable that the whole public will sneeze to-morrow. The performers are Baillot, Sauzay, Urhan, and Norblin—the best here.

My overture in A minor is completed; it represents bad weather. A few days ago I finished an introduction, in which thaw and spring arrive; I have counted the sheets of the "Walpurgis Night," revised the seven numbers a little, and then boldly written underneath—Milan, July; Paris, February. I think it will please you. I must now write an adagio for my quintett without delay; the performers are calling loudly for one, and they are right.

I do wish you could hear a rehearsal of my "Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Conservatoire, where they play it most beautifully. It is not yet certain whether it will be ready by next Sunday; there are to be two more rehearsals before then, but as yet it has only been twice played over. I think however that it will do, and I would rather it was given on Sunday than at the third concert, because I am to play on behalf of the poor on the 26th (something of Weber's),

and on the 27th at Érard's concert (my Munich Concerto), and at other places, and I should like my composition to appear first at the "Conservatoire." I am also to play there, and the members are anxious that I should give them a Sonata of Beethoven's; it may seem bold, but I prefer his Concerto in G major, which is quite unknown here.

I look forward with the utmost delight to the symphony in D minor, which is to be rehearsed next week; I certainly never dreamt that I should hear it in Paris for the first time.

I often visit the theatre, where I see a great display of wit and talent, but a degree of immorality that almost exceeds belief. It is supposed that no lady can go to the "Gymnase"—still they do go. Depict me to yourself as reading "Notre Dame," dining with one or other of my acquaintances every day, and taking advantage of the lovely bright spring weather after three o'clock, to take a walk, and to pay a few visits, and to look at the gaily-dressed ladies and gentlemen in the splendid gardens of the Tuileries—then you will have my day in Paris. Adieu!

FELIX.

Paris, February 21st, 1832.

Almost every letter that I receive from you now, announces some sad loss. Yesterday I got the one in which you tell me about poor U——, whom I shall no

longer find with you; so this is not a time for idle talk; I feel that I must work, and strive to make progress.

I have composed a grand adagio as an intermezzo for the quintett. It is called "Nachruf," and it occurred to me, as I had to compose something for Baillot, who plays so beautifully, and is so kindly disposed towards me, and who wishes to perform it in public; and yet he is only a recent acquaintance. Two days ago my overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream was given for the first time at a concert in the Conservatoire. It caused me great pleasure, for it went admirably, and seemed also to please the audience. It is to be repeated at one of the ensuing concerts, and my symphony, which has been rather delayed on this account, is to be rehearsed on Friday or Saturday. In the fourth or fifth concert, I am to play Beethoven's Concerto in G major.

The musicians are all crossing and blessing themselves at the honours conferred on me by the Conservatoire. They played my A minor quartett wonderfully last Tuesday; with such fire and precision, that it was delightful to listen to them, and as I can never again hear Rietz, I shall probably never hear it better given. It appeared to make a great impression on the audience, and at the scherzo they were quite uproarious.

It is now high time, dear Father, to write you a few words with regard to my travelling plans, and on this occasion in a more serious strain than usual, for many

reasons. I must first, in taking a general view of the past, refer to what you designed as the chief objects of my journey; and wished me strictly to adhere to. I was closely to examine the various countries, and to fix on the one where I wished to live and to work; I was further to make known my name and capabilities, in order that the people, among whom I resolved to settle, should receive me well, and not be wholly ignorant of my career; and, finally, I was to take advantage of my own good fortune, and your kindness, in preparing the ground for my future efforts. It is a happy feeling to be able to say, that I believe these objects have been carried out.

Always excepting those mistakes which are not discovered till too late, I think I have fulfilled these purposes. People now know that I exist, and that I have a purpose, and any talent that I display, they are ready to approve and to accept. They have *made advances* to me here, and asked for my music, which they seldom do; as all the others, even Onslow, have been obliged to *offer* their compositions. The London Philharmonic have requested me to perform something new of my own there on the 10th of March. I also got the commission from Munich without taking any step whatever to obtain it, and indeed not till *after* my concert It is my intention to give a concert here (if possible) and certainly in London in April, if the cholera does not prevent my going there; and this on my own account, in order to make money, that in this respect also I may

have felt my way before returning; I hope, therefore, I may say that I have also fulfilled this part of your wish —that I should make myself known to the public.

Your injunction too, to make choice of the country that I preferred to live in, I have equally performed, at least in a general point of view. That country is Germany. This is a point on which I have now quite made up my mind. I cannot yet, however, decide on the particular city, for the most important of all, which for various reasons has so many attractions for me, I have not yet thought of in this light—I allude to Berlin. On my return therefore I must ascertain whether I can remain and establish myself there, according to my views and wishes, after having seen and enjoyed other places.

This is also why I do not endeavour to get the commission for an opera here. If I compose really good music, which in these days is indispensable, it will both be understood and valued in Germany. (This has been the case with all the good operas there.) If I compose indifferent music, it will be quickly forgotten in Germany, but here it would be often performed and extolled, and sent to Germany, and given there on the authority of Paris, as we daily see. But I do not choose this; and if I am not capable of composing good music, I have no wish to be praised for it. So I shall first try Germany; and if things go so badly that I can no longer live there, I can then have recourse to some foreign country. Besides, few German theatres are so bad or in

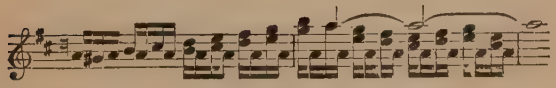
so dilapidated a condition as the Opéra Comique here. One bankruptcy succeeds another. When Cherubini is asked why he does not allow his operas to be given there, he replies, "Je ne fais pas donner des opéras, sans chœur, sans orchestre, sans chanteurs, et sans décorations." The Grand Opéra has bespoken operas for years to come, so there is no chance of anything being accepted by it for the next three or four years.

In the meantime therefore I intend to return to you to write my "Tempest," and to see how it succeeds. The plan, therefore, dear Father, that I wish to lay before you is this—to remain here till the end of March, or the beginning of April, (the invitation to the Philharmonic for the 10th of March, I have of course declined, or rather postponed,) then to go to London for a couple of months. If the Rhenish musical festival takes place, to which I am summoned, I shall go to Düsseldorf; and if not, return direct to you by the shortest road, and be by your side in the garden soon after Whitsunday. Farewell!

FELIX.

Paris, March 15th, 1832.

Dear Mother,



This is the 15th of March, 1832. May every happi-

ness and good attend you on this day. You prefer *receiving* my letter on your birthday, to its being written on the day itself: but forgive me for saying that I cannot accustom myself to this. My father said that no one could tell what might occur subsequently, therefore the letter ought to arrive on the anniversary of the day; but then I have this feeling in *double* measure, as I neither in that case know what is to occur to *you* on that day, nor to *myself;* but if your birthday be actually arrived, then I almost feel as if I were beside you, though you cannot hear my congratulations; and I can then send them to you, without any other solicitude than that of absence. This too will soon be over, please God. May He preserve you, and all at home, happily to me!

I have now begun to throw myself in right earnest into a musical life, and as I know this must be satisfactory to you, I will write some details; for a letter and a sketch-book that I wished to send you some days ago by Mortier's aide-de-camp, are still waiting, like all Paris, for the departure of the Marshal, which does not however take place. If the letter and the book do eventually reach you through this man, pray give a kind reception to the whole consignment, but especially to the man (Count Perthuis), for he is one of the most friendly and amiable persons I ever met with.

I had told you in that letter, that I am to play Beethoven's Concerto in G major two days hence, in the Conservatoire, and that the whole Court are to be pre-

sent for the first time at the concert. K—— is ready to eat me from envy; he at first tried by a thousand intrigues to prevent my playing altogether, and when he heard that the Queen was actually coming, he did everything in his power to get me out of the way. Happily all the other members of the Conservatoire, the all-powerful Habeneck in particular, are my faithful allies, and so he signally failed. He is the only musician here who acts unkindly and hypocritically towards me; and though I never placed much confidence in him, still it is always a very painful sensation to know that you are in the society of a person who hates you, but is careful not to show it.

The 17th.

I could not finish this letter, because during the last few days the incessant music I told you of, has been so overwhelming, that I really scarcely knew which way to turn. A mere catalogue therefore of all I have done, and have still to do, must suffice for to-day, and at the same time plead my excuse.

I have just come back from a rehearsal at the Conservatoire. We rehearsed steadily; everything twice yesterday, and to-day nearly everything repeated, but now all goes swimmingly. If the audience to-morrow are only half as enchanted as the orchestra to-day, we shall do well; for they shouted loudly for the adagio *da capo*, and Habeneck made them a little speech, to point out to them that at the close there was a solo bar,

which they must be so good as to wait for. You would be gratified to see all the little kindnesses and courtesies the latter shows me. At the end of each movement of the symphony, he asks me if there is anything I do not approve of, so I have been able for the first time, to introduce, with a French orchestra, some favourite *nuances* of my own.

After the rehearsal Baillot played my octett in his class, and if any man in the world can play it, he is the man. His performance was finer than I ever heard it, and so was that of Urhan, Norblin, and the others, who all attacked the piece with a perfect frenzy of zeal.

Besides all this, I must finish the arrangement of the overture and the octett, and revise the quintett, as Simrock has bought it. I must write out "Lieder," and enjoy the author's delight of working up my B minor quartett, for it is to be brought out here by two different publishers, who have requested me to make some alterations before it is published. Finally, I have *soirées* every evening. To-night Bohrer's; to-morrow a fête, with all the violin *gamins* of the Conservatoire; next day, Rothschild; Tuesday, the Société des Beaux Arts; Wednesday my octett at the Abbé Bardin's; Thursday, my octett at Madame Kiéné's; Friday, a concert at Érard's; Sunday, a concert at Léo's; and lastly, on Monday—laugh if you choose—my octett is to be performed in a church, at a funeral Mass in commemoration of Beethoven. This is the most absurd thing the world ever yet saw, but I could not refuse, and I in

some degree enjoy the thoughts of being present, when Low Mass is read during the scherzo. I can scarcely imagine anything more absurd than a priest at the altar and my scherzo going on. It is like travelling *incognito.* Last of all, Baillot gives a grand concert on the 7th of April, and so I have promised him to remain here till then, and to play a Concerto of Mozart's for him, and some other piece.

On the 8th I take my place in the diligence, and set off to London, but before doing so I shall have heard my symphony in the Conservatoire, and sold various pieces, and shall leave this, rejoicing in the friendly reception I have met with from the musicians here.—Farewell! FELIX.

Paris, March 31st, 1832.

Pray forgive my long silence, but I had nothing cheering to communicate, and am always very unwilling to write gloomy letters. Indeed, this being the case, I had better still have remained silent, for I am in anything but a gay mood. But now that we have the spectre here,* I mean to write to you regularly, that you may know that I am well, and pursuing my work.

The sad news of Goethe's loss makes me feel poor indeed! What a blow to the country! It is another of those tidings which I have received here, which will

* The cholera.

always recur to my mind at the very name of Paris; and not all the kindness I have received, nor the tumult and excitement, nor the life of gaiety here, can ever efface this impression. May it please God to preserve me from still worse tidings, and grant us all a happy meeting; this is the chief thing!

Various circumstances have induced me to delay my departure from here for at least a fortnight,—that is, till the middle of April; and the idea of my concert has begun to revive in my mind; I mean to accomplish it too, if the cholera does not deter people from musical, or any other kind of réunions. We shall know this in the course of a week, and in any case I must remain here so long. I believe however that everything will go on in the usual regular course, and the "Figaro" prove to be in the right, which had an article called "Enfoncé le choléra," arguing that as Paris is the grave of all reputations, for no one there ever admired anything; yawning at Paganini (he does not seem to please much this time), and not even looking round in the street at an Emperor or a Dey; so the cholera must also lose its formidable reputation here.

Count Perthuis has no doubt told you of my playing at the Conservatoire. The French say that it was *un beau succès,* and the audience were pleased. The Queen, too, sent me all sorts of fine compliments on the subject. On Saturday I am again to play twice in public. My octett, in church on Monday last, exceeded in absurdity anything the world ever saw or heard of. While

the priest was officiating at the altar during the scherzo it really sounded like "Fliegen-schnauz und Mückennas, verfluchte Dilettanten." The people however considered it very fine sacred music.

I am indeed delighted, dear Father, that my quartett in B minor pleases you; it is a favourite of mine, and I like to play it, although the adagio is much too cloying; still, the scherzo that follows has all the more effect. I can see that it is my A minor quartett which you seem rather inclined to deride, when you say that there is a piece of instrumental music which has made you rack your brains to discover the composer's thoughts; when, in fact, he probably had no thoughts at all. I must defend the work, for I love it; but it certainly depends very much on the way in which it is executed, and one single musician who could perform it with zeal and sympathy, as Taubert did, would make a vast difference.—Your

FELIX.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM LONDON.

London, April 27th, 1832.

I wish I could only describe how happy I feel to be here once more; how much I like everything, and how gratified I am by the kindness of old friends; but as it is all going on at this moment, I must be brief for to-day.

I have also a number of people to seek out whom

I have not yet seen, whilst with Klingemann, Rosen, and Moscheles, I have fallen into as close intimacy as if we had never been parted. They form the nucleus of my present sojourn; we see each other every day; it is a delight to me to be once more among good, earnest men, and true friends, with whom I do not require to be on my guard, nor to study them either. Moscheles and his wife show me a degree of touching kindness, which I value the more as my regard for them increases; and then the feeling of restored health, as if I lived afresh, and had come anew into this world—all these are combined.*

May 11th.

I cannot describe to you the happiness of these first weeks here. As from time to time every evil seems to accumulate, as it did in Paris, during my winter there, when I lost some of my most beloved friends, never felt quite at home, and at last became very ill; so the reverse sometimes occurs, and thus it is in this charming country, where I find old friends again, and feel myself happy, and among well-wishers, and enjoy in the fullest measure the sensation of returning health. Moreover it is warm, the lilacs are in bloom, and music is going on; only imagine how pleasant all this is!

I must really describe one happy morning last week:

* Felix Mendelssohn had an attack of cholera during the last weeks of his stay in Paris.

of all the flattering demonstrations I have hitherto received, it is the one which has most pleased and affected me, and perhaps the only one which I shall always recall with fresh pleasure. There was a rehearsal last Saturday at the Philharmonic, where however nothing of mine was given, my overture not being yet written out. After Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony," during which I was in a box, I wished to go into the room to talk to some old friends; scarcely, however, had I gone down below, when one of the orchestra called out, "There is Mendelssohn!" on which they all began shouting, and clapping their hands to such a degree, that for a time I really did not know what to do; and when this was over, another called out "Welcome to him!" on which the same uproar recommenced, and I was obliged to cross the room, and to clamber into the orchestra, and return thanks.

Never can I forget it, for it was more precious to me than any distinction, as it showed me that the *musicians* loved me, and rejoiced at my coming, and I cannot tell you what a glad feeling this was.

May 18th.

Dear Father,

I have received your letter of the 9th; God grant that Zelter may by this time be safe, and out of danger! You say indeed that he already is so, but I shall anxiously expect your next letter, to see the news of his

recovery confirmed. I have dreaded this ever since Goethe's death, but when it actually occurs, it is a very different thing. May Heaven avert it!

Pray tell me also what you mean by saying "there is no doubt that Zelter both wishes, and requires, to have you with him, because, at all events for the present, it is quite impossible for him to carry on the Academy, whence it is evident that if you do not undertake it, another must." Has Zelter expressed this wish to you, or do you only imagine that he entertains it? If the former were the case, I would instantly, on receiving your reply, write to Zelter, and offer him every service in my power, of every kind, and try to relieve him from all his labours, for as long a period as he desired; and this it certainly would be my duty to do.

I intended to have written to Lichtenstein before my return, about the proposal formerly made to me,* but of course I have given up all thoughts of doing so at present; for on no account would I assume that Zelter could not resume his duties, and even in that event, I could not reconcile myself to discuss the matter with any one but himself; every other mode of proceeding I should consider unfair towards him. If however he requires my services, I am ready, and shall rejoice if I can be of any use to him, but still more so, if he does not want me, and is entirely recovered. I beg you will write me a few words on this subject.

I must now inform you of my plans and engagements

* In reference to a situation in the Singakademie.

till I leave this. Yesterday I finished the "Rondeau brillant," and I am to play it this day week at Mori's evening concert. The day after I rehearse my Munich Concerto at the Philharmonic, and play it on Monday the 28th at their concert; on the 1st of June Moscheles' concert, where, with him, I play a Concerto of Mozart's for two pianos, and conduct my two overtures, "The Hebrides" and "The Midsummer Night's Dream." Finally, the last Philharmonic is on the 11th, where I am to conduct some piece.

I must finish the arrangement for Cramer, and some "Lieder" for the piano, also some songs with English words, besides some German ones for myself, for after all it is spring, and the lilacs are in bloom. Last Monday "The Hebrides" was given for the first time in the Philharmonic; it went admirably, and sounded very quaint among a variety of Rossini pieces. The audience received both me and my work with extreme kindness. This evening is Mr. Vaughan's concert; but I am sure you must be quite sick of hearing of so many concerts, so I conclude.

Norwood, Surrey, May 25th.

These are hard times, and many are laid low!* May it please God to preserve you all to me, and to grant us a joyful meeting! You will receive this letter from the same villa whence I wrote to you three years ago last November, just before my return.

* He had received the news of Zelter's death.

I have now come out here for a few days to rest, and to collect my thoughts, just as I did at that time, on account of my health. All is unchanged here; my room is precisely the same; even the music in the old cupboard stands exactly in the same spot; the people are quite as considerate, and quiet, and attentive as formerly, and the three years have passed over both them and their house, as peacefully as if half the world had not been uprooted during that period.

It is pleasant to see; the only difference is, that we have now gay spring, and apple-blossoms, and lilacs, and all kinds of flowers, whereas at that time we had autumn, with its fogs and blazing fires; but how much is now gone for ever, that we then still had; this gives much food for thought. I feel now just as I did at that time, when I wrote to you saying little, save "farewell till we meet." It will indeed be a graver meeting, and I bring no "Liederspiel" with me composed in this room, as the former one was, but God grant I may only find you all well.

You write, dear Fanny, that I ought especially to hasten my return, in order if possible to secure the situation in the Academy; but this I do not choose to do. I shall return as soon as I can, because my father writes that he wishes me to do so; I therefore intend to set off in about a fortnight, but solely for *that* reason; the other motive would rather tend to detain me here, indeed, if any motive could do so; for I will in no manner solicit the situation.

When I reminded my father formerly of the proposal of the Director, the reasons which he then advanced against it, seemed to me perfectly just; he said that he regarded this place rather as a sinecure for more advanced years, "when the Academy might be resorted to as a harbour of refuge." For the next few years I aspire as little to *this* as to any other situation; my purpose is to live by the fruits of my labours just as I do here, and my resolve is to be independent. Considering the peculiar position of the Academy, the small salary given, and the great influence it might exercise, the place of Director seems to me only an honorary post, which I have no desire to *sue* for. If they were to offer it to me, I would accept it, because I promised formerly to do so; but only for a settled time and on certain conditions; and if they do not intend to offer it, then my presence can be of no possible use. I do not certainly require to convince them of my capability for the office, and I neither will, nor can, make interest. Besides, for the reasons mentioned in a previous letter, I cannot leave England till after the 11th, and the affair will no doubt be decided before that time.

I beg that no step of any kind may be taken on my behalf, except *that* which my father mentioned concerning my immediate return; but nothing in the smallest degree approaching to solicitation; and when they do make their choice, I only hope that they may find a man, who will perform his duties with as much zeal as old Zelter.

I received the intelligence in the morning, just as I was going to write to him; then came a rehearsal of my new piece for the piano, with its wild gaiety, and when the musicians were applauding and complimenting me, I could not help feeling strongly, that I was indeed in a foreign land. I then came out here, where I found both men and places unchanged; then Hauser unexpectedly arrived, and we fell into each other's arms, and recalled the happy days we had enjoyed together in South Germany the previous autumn, and all that has passed away for ever, during the last six months. Your mournful news was always present to me in its sad reality—so this is the manner in which I have spent the last few days here. Forgive me for not being able to write properly to-day. I go to town this evening to play, and also to-morrow, Sunday, and Monday.

I have now a favour to ask of you, dear Father, in reference to the cantatas of Sebastian Bach, which Zelter possessed. If you can possibly prevent their being disposed of before my return, pray do so, for I am most anxious at any price to see the entire collection before it is dispersed.

I should have liked to tell you of many agreeable things that have occurred to me during the last few weeks, for every day brings me fresh proofs that the people like me, and are glad to associate with me; which is gratifying, and makes my life here easy and pleasant; but to-day I really cannot. Perhaps in my

next letter, my spirits may be sufficiently restored, to return to my usual narrative style.

Many remembrances from the Moscheles; they are excellent people, and after so long an interval, it is most cheering once more to meet an artist, who is not a victim to envy, jealousy, or miserable egotism. He makes continued and steady progress in his art.

The warm sun is shining out of doors, so I shall now go down into the garden, to perform some gymnastics there, and to smell the lilacs; this will show you that I am well.

London, June 1st.

On the day that I received the news of Zelter's death, I thought that I should have had a serious illness, and indeed during the whole of the ensuing week I could not shake off this feeling. My manifold engagements however have now diverted my thoughts, and brought me to myself, or rather out of myself. I am well again, and very busy.

First of all I must thank you, dear Father, for your kind letter. It is in a great measure already answered by my previous one, but I will now repeat why I decline sending any application to the committee.

In the first place, I quite agree with your former opinion, that this situation in the Academy is not desirable at the outset of my career; indeed I would only accept it for a certain time, and under particular conditions, and even then, solely to perform my previous promise. If I solicit it, I am bound to accept the place,

as they choose to give it, and to comply with their conditions as to salary, duties, etc., though I do not as yet even know what these are.

In the second place, the reason they gave you why I should write, seems to me neither a true nor a straight forward one. They say they wish to be certain I will accept of it, and that on this account I must enrol myself among the candidates; but when they *offered* it to me three years ago, Lichtenstein said they did so to ascertain if I would take it, and begged me to give a distinct answer on this point; at that time I said *yes*, that I was willing to carry it on, along with Rungenhagen. I am not sure that I should think the same now; but as I said so then, I can no longer draw back, and must keep my word. It is not necessary to repeat my assent, for as I once gave it, so it must remain: still less can I do so when I should have to *offer* myself to them for the post they once *offered to me*. If they were disposed to adhere to their former offer, they would not require me to take a step which they took themselves three years ago; on the contrary, they would remember the assent I then gave, for they must know that I am incapable of breaking such a promise.

A confirmation of my former promise is therefore quite unnecessary, and if they intend to appoint another to the situation, my letter would not prevent their doing so. I must further refer to my letter from Paris, in which I told you that I wished to return to Berlin

in the spring, as it was the only city in Germany with which I was still unacquainted.

This is my well-weighed purpose; I do not know how I shall get on in Berlin, or whether I shall be able to remain there,—that is, whether I shall be able to enjoy the same facilities for work and progress, that are offered to me in other places. The only house that I know in Berlin is our own, and I feel certain I shall be quite happy there; but I must also be in a position to be actively employed, and as to this I shall know nothing till I return. I hope that all will come to pass as I wish, for of course the spot where *you* live must be always dearest to me: but till I know this to a certainty I do not wish to fetter myself by any situation.

I conclude, because I have a vast deal to do to enable me to set off after the next Philharmonic. I must publish several pieces before I go; I receive numbers of commissions on all sides, and some so gratifying that I exceedingly regret not being able to set to work at once.

Among others, I this morning got a note from a publisher, who wishes me to give him the score of two grand pieces of sacred music, for morning and evening service: you may imagine how much I am pleased with this proposal, and immediately on my arrival in the Leipziger Strasse I intend to begin them.

"The Hebrides" I mean to reserve for a time for myself, before arranging it as a duet; but my new

rondo is in hand, and I must finish those everlasting "Lieder" for the piano, as well as various other arrangements, and probably the Concerto. I played it last Monday in the Philharmonic, and I think I never in my life had such success. The audience were crazy with delight, and declared it was my best work.

I am now going to Moscheles' concert, to conduct there, and to play Mozart's Concerto, in which I have inserted two long cadences for each of us.

FELIX.

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